

A SOCIO-POLITICAL READING OF HOSEA'S MARRIAGE METAPHOR  
AND PENTATEUCHAL CITATIONS  
IN DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC APPROACHES

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by  
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This dissertation completed by

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## ABSTRACT

### A SOCIO-POLITICAL READING OF HOSEA'S MARRIAGE METAPHOR AND PENTATEUCHAL CITATIONS IN DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC APPROACHES

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Previous scholarly interpretations of the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations (the Jacob tradition, the Exodus tradition, and the Wilderness tradition) in the book of Hosea tend to only focus on religious problems of Israel, arguing that Hosea accuses the Israelites of their unfaithfulness and apostasy against YHWH. Their arguments are based on inaccurate structural demarcations and biased redactional critical approaches. However, my form critical interpretation including both diachronic and synchronic approaches proposes that religious apostasy is not the only intention of these two rhetorical literary devices (the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations) and that the book of Hosea was written to advocate Hosea's socio-political viewpoint based on his understanding of northern Israel among the empires (Assyria and Egypt) and small states.

Hosea's proclamation is to point out that northern Israel has a political alliance with Assyria which means that they are trading between Assyria and Egypt. Hosea, of course, does not like this political relationship because Hosea believes that political relationship with Assyria is idolatry. In particular, the vassal treaty relationship with

Assyria made by Jehu (842-815 BCE) is the main problem about which Hosea strongly objects. Instead, Hosea attempts to persuade the Israelites that they must ally with Aram like “Jacob, our ancestor.”

The Ancient Near Eastern materials of both Shalmaneser III and Adad Nirari III confirm the following: Israel had an anti-Assyrian policy during the reign of the house of Omri; King Jehu overturned this and instituted a pro-Assyrian policy which Hosea regarded as a disaster for northern Israel, which continued throughout the reign of the house of Jehu. These materials provide an important background to Hosea’s use of the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations. Hosea’s rhetorical proclamation influenced northern Israelite kings such as Shallum and later Pekah who attempted to abandon such an illicit relationship with Assyria and recover the previous allied relationship with Aram.

Based on the Ancient Near Eastern materials and form critical analysis, I argue that Hosea’s use of the marriage metaphor (Hos 1–3) and Pentateuchal citations (Hos 12) plays a significant role in supporting Hosea’s main argument in relation to Israel’s political setting during the mid-eighth century BCE.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Anchor Bible
AASF	Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
AS	Anatolian Studies
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BOSHNP	Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
EJ	Encyclopedia Judaica
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IRAQ</i>	<i>Journal of The British Institute for the Study of IRAQ</i>



<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JDDS	Jian Dao Dissertation Series
<i>JHS</i>	<i>The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text, as represented by <i>Codex Leningradensis</i>
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
<i>NKZ</i>	<i>Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevScRel</i>	<i>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</i>
SHBC	Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary
<i>Sum</i>	<i>Sumer</i>
SupVT	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
SWBAS	Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

The interpretations of the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations in the book of Hosea have long been a focus of critical scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars believe that the marriage metaphor constructs the main message of the prophet and the book as a whole. These scholars understand that the metaphor of unfaithfulness refers to Hosea's accusation that Israel is apostate. However, I propose that the religious apostasy is not the only intention of the metaphor. Instead, I argue that the marriage metaphor is written to advocate Hosea's socio-political viewpoint which indicates the political mistake made by King Jehu when he allied with Assyria, and its consequences upon northern Israel.

Also, throughout the book, Hosea frequently uses Pentateuchal traditions, such as the Jacob tradition, the Exodus tradition, and the Wilderness tradition. It is because these

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<sup>1</sup> For the general history of scholarly interpretations of the book of Hosea, see Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980); Dwight Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History: The Early Traditions of Israel in the Prophecy of Hosea*, BZAW 191 (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1990); Graham I. Davies, *Hosea* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992); Carol Dempsey, *The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Edmond Jacob, Carl A. Keller, and Samuel Amsler, *Osée, Joël, Amos, Abdias, Jonas* (Neuchatel, Switzerland: Delachaux et Niestle, 1965); Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983); Francis Landy, *Hosea* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); A. A. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997); Daniel Simundson, *Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005); Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, ed. David W. Cotter, Jerome T. Walsh, and Chris Franke, vol. 1, BOSHNP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000); Hans W. Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Gale A. Yee, "Hosea," in *The Twelve Prophets*, NIB 7 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 197–297.

traditions remind the Israelites that their ancestors allied with Aram, and Egypt was their enemy throughout Israel's history. The relationship with Assyria is negatively viewed by Hosea as he claims, "Assyria cannot save us" in Hos 14:4[14:3]. Hosea's intention is to point out the political alliance that northern Israel has with both Assyria and Egypt. Hosea, of course, does not like this political relationship because as far as he is concerned, that relationship with Assyria is idolatry and brings disaster.

By using these two rhetorical literary devices, the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations, Hosea strongly proclaims that northern Israel must ally with Aram like "Jacob, our ancestor." Therefore, I argue that the character of the book is not entirely religious, but it is also political. I will base my argument on Ancient Near Eastern materials which will provide a proper background for Hosea's historical setting. Scholars are correct that the metaphor and Pentateuchal citations are important working devices to deliver Hosea's concern, but previous studies were limited in that they did not connect them with the socio-historical setting of the prophet's time when Assyria had enormous influence over small states in the west.

## 1.2. A Brief Research of the Previous Problem

Several initial observations concerning the problems of the previous research are necessary. First, one of the major obstacles to the study of the book of Hosea as a whole is ironically the most famous metaphor, namely the marriage metaphor in Hos 1–3. This is affirmed in recent research about the book of Hosea by Brad Kelle when he states that "the story of the scholarly metaphor in Hosea has focused overwhelmingly on the

marriage metaphor.”<sup>2</sup> In my view, scholars have separated the marriage metaphor from the book of Hosea and published many monographs focusing on the various imageries and religious apostasy reflected in the metaphor.<sup>3</sup> In previous research, for example, Yehezkel Kaufmann, followed by H. L. Ginsberg, argues that Hos 1–3 and Hos 4–14 come from different prophets in different time periods because Hos 1–3 is so radically distinguished from the rest.<sup>4</sup> In particular, Kaufmann suggests that there is absolutely no literary and thematic link between Hos 1–3 and Hos 4–14.<sup>5</sup> Another scholar, Hans Walter Wolff, lays out the structure of the book of Hosea as chapters 1–3, 4–11, and 12–14, based on his redactional approach, and argues that each section “moves from accusation to threat, and then to the proclamation of salvation.”<sup>6</sup> This division that many scholars generally found convincing greatly influenced Hosean scholarship. However, the problem is that the division interferes with proper interpretation, so as to create artificial boundaries which limit Hosea’s rhetorical concern throughout the book. Therefore, the

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<sup>2</sup> Brad E. Kelle, “Hosea 1-3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship,” *CBR* 7, no. 2 (2009): 180.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of scholarship on this subject, see chapters two and four where the topic is discussed at length.

<sup>4</sup> Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. M Greenberg (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937), 368; H. L. Ginsberg, “Hosea,” *EJ*, 8 (Jerusalem; New York: Keter Publishing House; Macmillan, 1971), col. 1010–1024.

<sup>5</sup> Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, 368–369. Cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*. Andersen and Freedman argue that Hos 1–3 and Hos 4–14 show different origins and were combined later during the Babylonian exile.

<sup>6</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, xxxi.

interpretation of the book of Hosea is limited because this division does not consider the book as a cohesive unit and hinders proper engagement with other parts of the book.

Second, recently, redaction criticism has suggested another way of understanding the structure of the book of Hosea. As mentioned above, Wolff's three divisions are based on his redaction critical approach and he suggests structural models that trace the compositional history from an initial book written when Israel actually suffered invasion by the Assyrian army to the final form that emerged in the post-exilic period. Another scholar, Gale Yee, in her book, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, proposes that there are at least four stages that are derived from each common redactional work.<sup>7</sup> She argues that the redactional stages, while developing, show "how later stages revised and reinterpreted the earlier stages"<sup>8</sup> and that the different stages are interrelated as a book. However, the relationship of these passages has not been explained by a redaction critical analysis and the intention of these passages has not been defined in detail. Yee fails to see the political background of the book of Hosea when she analyzes the early Hosean tradition stage.<sup>9</sup>

Third, more radically, in his book, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea*, James Bos argues that the book of Hosea is a production of the Persian period because the Israelite administration had controlled reading and writing, and therefore no northern king would ever have let Hosea write such a negative view of the

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<sup>7</sup> Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redaction Critical Investigation* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 10–13, 305–308; Yee, "Hosea," 197–297.



institution of kingship.<sup>10</sup> He argues that the socio-political context of the Persian period is a more suitable social setting for the book of Hosea. In my view, this last point is particularly problematic in the overall interpretation of the book in that it ignores any historical argument for the production of the book of Hosea during the monarchic period. In addition, the scholarly view that the book is anti-monarchical literature in general does not mean that the book could not have been written during such period. Rather, I argue that Hosea is not anti-monarchical in general but instead is exclusively critical of the dynasty of King Jehu.

Lastly, scholars who interpret and understand the metaphors and the Pentateuchal citations as an accusation of Israel's religious apostasy have overlooked the socio-political intention of the author of the book of Hosea. They deny any vassal relationship with Assyria before northern Israel fell because there is no clear textual evidence in the Bible. However, this ignores the Assyrian inscriptional evidence, such as the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III and vassal list of Adad Nirari III. Some scholars, such as Grayson in his *Cambridge Ancient History*, claim that there was no evidence that Shalmaneser III's treaty was ever effective, because the Bible never talks about Assyria this early. For example, the Bible does not mention Shalmaneser III's attempt to cross the Euphrates in 853 BCE, which was opposed by a coalition led by Hadadezer of Damascus and Ahab of Israel. Thus, scholars assume that it never happened. However, the treaty relationship between Israel and Assyria gripped Aram in a vise between them and finally this political situation weakened the military force of Aram so Israel was able to flourish.

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<sup>10</sup> James M. Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea: The Case for Persian-Period Yehud*, LHBOTS 580 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 35–39.

As a result, during the Jehu dynasty, Jehoash ben Jehoahaz of Israel was able to take control of the Transjordan area that was lost by Aram again.<sup>11</sup> In addition, his son, Jeroboam ben Jehoash, continued to enlarge Israel. The Bible does not provide an account of how Israel recovered. However, we have to understand what a treaty means and how diplomacy worked in that period. The treaty relationship could be an important force to change the action of another nation.

These previous approaches to the book provide various incomplete arguments. That is because their approaches emphasized either synchronic dimensions or diachronic dimensions of the book. Scholars now recognize these limitations and current scholarship is attempting to address this problem. The proper interpretation of diachronic dimensions can yield more productive outcomes in the analysis of the reading of the texts.

### 1.3. Purpose and Scope of the Study

This present study will contribute to the dating of the book of Hosea in relation to the socio-political situation reflected in the text. It will also suggest a socio-political reading and interpretation of Hosea's marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations. In other words, this study will emphasize the importance of reading intertextual references in the Pentateuch in relation to the political situation of Hosea's time. The key questions I

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<sup>11</sup> The King Hazael of Aram took Israelite territory in this area as noted in 2 Kgs 10:32–33. Then, 2 Kgs 13:25 reports that Jehoash (Joash), son of Jehoahaz retook the towns from Ben-Hadad, son of Hazael. Cf. Jeffrey K. Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine: Israelite/Judean-Tyrian-Damascene Political and Commercial Relations in the Ninth-Eighth Centuries BCE*, JDDS 1 (Hong Kong: Alliance Biblical Seminary, 1995), 35–47.

will address are 1) how did Hosea understand the socio-political situation of northern Israel?; 2) what was Hosea's socio-political standpoint?; 3) how does Hosea use the marriage metaphor and the Pentateuchal traditions to support his argument?; and 4) how does Hosea use polemical language of idolatry to characterize or caricaturize his opponents or the objects of his criticism?

The main goal is to determine how Hosea's marriage metaphor (Hos 1–3) and Pentateuchal citations (Hos 12) view Israel's political situation. In the discussion of the metaphor and citations, I will first explore the history of scholarly interpretations in detail in order to set up a background for my criticism. In particular, this study will employ form critical method to examine the main texts through both synchronic and diachronic approaches. For these analyses, I will first translate the Hebrew text and add critical notes on the Hebrew terms as needed. The form critical method will first examine synchronically the present structure of the text in its larger context by demarcating the unit of the text as a legitimate literary entity. In this process, its form and content will be the critical literary devices used to structure the units. Literary genres employed in the text also will be identified. The text utilizes various genres from the most basic, such as narrative, speech, and songs, to the specific, such as messenger formula, superscription, and prophetic announcement. Following that, a diachronic approach to the text will discover the various settings in which the text was written, to which it is addressed, etc. Then, finally, the intention of the text will be discussed based on the discussion of structure, genre, and setting.

This study will proceed as follows. In chapter two, I will discuss the history of research of the book of Hosea and point out the problematic ground of some of the

research. Researchers previously have disregarded the importance of the book as a whole. Both literary and redactional separations of different blocks within the book of Hosea fail to interpret the book's original intention. Then, I will discuss the methodology that I will use in this study taking advantage of developments in form critical method that allow for the synthesis of synchronic and diachronic approaches.

Chapter three will offer an examination of the Assyrian archeological materials which provide an important social background to Israel's political situation among the nations during Hosea's time. This chapter argues that the influences from ancient writings and Assyrian archeological materials point out that northern Israel had suffered from the power play of stronger nations such as Assyria.

In chapter four, I will analyze Hosea's marriage metaphor in Hos 1–3 in detail in order to support my interpretation of the overarching purpose in the book of Hosea. Along with the marriage metaphor which claims Israel's religious apostasy against YHWH, I will argue that the marriage motif plays a significant role in reflecting Hosea's political viewpoint in terms of the love language used in ancient covenant and treaty texts. Through the imageries of the marriage motif, Hosea insists that the political relationship with Assyria brings disaster for Israel. I will also analyze all textual references to King Jehu, the names of Hosea's children, and Hosea's wife, all of which point out Hosea's strong awareness of political problem in northern Israel.

In chapter five, I will begin an analysis of Hosea 12 by providing a form critical analysis, using both synchronic and diachronic approaches. In particular, Hos 12 plays a significant role in making a compelling argument against the alliance with Assyria by

presenting the Pentateuchal traditions to explain the past. All Hosea's citations from the Jacob tradition, the Exodus tradition, and the Wilderness tradition carefully explain historical significances of these traditions and persuade the Israelites to learn from them.

Finally, chapter six will conclude by offering a cohesive picture of the book of Hosea as a whole based on the conclusions of the previous chapters. I will show that Hosea's marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations are his rhetorical devices. The study of Assyrian inscriptions show that the dating of the book of Hosea can only be understood in relation to the socio-historical situation reflected in the combined study of these materials.

## CHAPTER TWO: PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Overview of Research on the Book of Hosea Based on Its Problem

Scholars have generally experienced many troubles interpreting the book of Hosea. In his research on the book of Hosea in twentieth century scholarship, Brad Kelle states that scholars witness the puzzle, the challenge, and “the vexing nature of this book and its interpretation.”<sup>1</sup> Under this difficult situation of exegesis, scholars continue to analyze this book with different methods and approaches. The following survey of scholarship will identify the focuses of scholarly interest within the past decades regarding the interpretation of the book of Hosea and also provides the current status of scholarship on various topics. Due to the fact that this study has a practical orientation rather than merely serving as a collection of history of scholarship, my focus will be upon a few topics with questions that will ultimately support my argument. The topics are: 1) previous structural separations misunderstand the book as a whole; 2) is the book of Hosea a religious text or a political text? 3) debate on Hosea’s political standpoint toward kingship; and 4) debate on the dating of the book of Hosea. Based on these topics that I see as a basis of problematic approaches to the book, I will discuss scholarly arguments and suggest that the structure of the book is important to understand Hosea’s prophetic speech and its seamless connection throughout the book as a whole. Hosea rhetorically persuades his audience, pointing out that the current political alliance with Assyria brings disaster, while he accuses the Israelites of sinful apostasy against YHWH. Hosea’s criticism is not focusing on the monarchy and its political structure per se, but on King

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<sup>1</sup> Kelle, “Hosea 1-3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship,” 180.

Jehu who established the wrong international relationship between Assyria and Israel. The majority of the book contains Hosea's own messages, displaying coherent and consecutive arguments and preaching his understanding of the looming national threat. In other words, the motif of marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations are all connected, constructing a bridge from the beginning to the end of the book of Hosea.

#### 2.1.1. Previous structural separations misunderstand the book as a whole

As I mentioned earlier, throughout the scholarship of the book of Hosea, one of the major focuses appears to be the marriage metaphor in Hos 1–3, and many scholars generally view Hos 1–3 as distinct from the other part of the book. This tendency is still recognizable in the publication of many independent monographs on the marriage metaphor. Nevertheless, this scholarly focus unfortunately caused the problem of structural separation which eventually prevented proper interpretation of the book of Hosea as a whole. Some scholars thought that each material has different background and came to the book from different resources throughout the redactional history of Hosea and others paid too much attention to the section of the book, ignoring any engagement with other parts of the book. This is evident in the history of the scholarship of the structure of the book of Hosea.

Many scholars previously agreed that the macrostructure of the book is divided between Hos 1–3 and 4–14. The discussion of the divisions of the book actually goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century debate as I briefly stated above. There was a discussion on this division and the debate actually was between two different segments: one camp, mainly

by Georg Ewald,<sup>2</sup> argued for the unity and artistic coherence of the book of Hosea because they believed that one prophet worked during different times, and the other camp, mainly by Thomas Cheyne and Yehezkel Kaufmann,<sup>3</sup> discovered different hands in the book of Hosea and believed that there were two different prophets: Hos 1–3 was a product of a prophet from the time of Jehoram (853-842) and Hos 4–14 was a prophetic narrative of a prophet who lived a century later.<sup>4</sup> In these debates, they anyway presumed that Hos 1–3 was different than Hos 4–14 in many ways whether it was a product of one prophet or two.

Later commentaries show clear divisional understanding of the book of Hosea. For example, in *Hosea* in the Anchor Bible series, Francis Andersen and David Freedman clearly divided the book into two different sections named “Hosea’s Marriage” in Hos 1–3 and “Hosea’s Prophecies” in Hos 4–14.<sup>5</sup> They believed that this distinction came from

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<sup>2</sup> Georg Ewald, *Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament. Vol. 1: Joel, Amos, Hosea and Zechariah*, trans. J. F. Smith (London: Williams & Norgate, 1875), 214.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Cheyne, *Hosea, with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889), 20; Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. M Greenberg (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937), 368–372; Cf. Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redaction Critical Investigation* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 1–2. The overall discussion on the debate of the two camps appears in her book in detail. In addition, she introduces the argument of Heinrich Graetz who argued for two different Hoseas living fifty years apart from each other.

<sup>4</sup> Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, 370. Kaufmann believes that the “the house of Jehu” in Hos 1:4 is not adequate. Kaufmann states, “The LXX reading here is ‘Judah’ instead of ‘Jehu’ which is, in turn, graphically close to ‘Jehoram.’ Read, accordingly, ‘the house of Jehoram’-Jehoram son of Ahab in whose time the sins of Ahab’s house were punished. Hosea 1–3 is, then, a prophetic narrative from the time of Jehoram (853-842 BCE).” Cf. Ginsberg, “Hosea,” col. 1010–1024.

<sup>5</sup> Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 52.



the different genre of the literature in the book of Hosea as the first section appeared in narrative style and the second section in poetic and prophetic style.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Andersen and Freedman argued that the two parts remained independent for a while until they were joined and compiled sometime after the time of the prophet.<sup>7</sup> Yet, Andersen and Freedman asserted that the book was the work of a single person.<sup>8</sup> In his book, *Hosea*, Wilhelm Rudolph asserts that the nature of the two parts differ greatly.<sup>9</sup> In his book, *Hosea*, James Mays also acknowledges that the book combines two distinct and easily recognized sections.<sup>10</sup> According to Mays, the first section serves as an introduction of the book, and the second section appears to be a collection of the materials that were available to Hosea during his time, and the materials were simply organized based on the themes and catchwords.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Mays's understanding of the structure is still in the sense that the book has a loose connection as a whole.

Another view of the overall structure of the book of Hosea comprises three textual divisions. Hos 1–3 dramatizes Hosea's marriage as a metaphor reflecting the relationship between YHWH and Israel. Hos 4–11 includes Hosea's proclamation of judgment against

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 61. Jakob Wöhrle, however, believes that the contents of Hos 4–14 are not categorized by theme or chronology. See Jakob Wöhrle, *Die frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches: Entstehung und Komposition* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 54.

<sup>7</sup> Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 59.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm Rudolph, *Hosea*, KAT, XIII (Gütersloher Verlagshaus: Gerd Mohn, 1966), 25.

<sup>10</sup> James L. Mays, *Hosea*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 15.

various leaderships. Hos 12–14 presents some of the important traditional narratives proclaiming the apostasy of Israel and its consequences when people denied Hosea’s call for Israel’s return to YHWH. Some scholars notice that each of the three divisions begins with judgmental material and ends with restoration.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, based on the redaction critical approach, they believe that each division displays an original text of judgment from the prophet and the text has been modified and redacted by the addition of material pertaining to restoration at a later time. For example, in his book, *Hosea*, Hans Wolff argues that the book of Hosea consists of three collections of transmitted self-contained complexes, and these three complexes are parallel to each other in that “they each move from accusation to threat, and then to the proclamation of salvation.”<sup>13</sup> He proposes that each collection may stem from different writers but appear to be in the same circle of Hosea’s followers who initiated the Deuteronomic movement. He suggests that several of these redactional steps “covered a period of almost two hundred years.”<sup>14</sup> In my view, Wolff’s understanding of the judgment to restoration is totally based on the application of the Deuteronomic movement in relation to the redaction critical approach.

In the same vein, in her book, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, Gale Yee argues that the three divisions were created by the final redactor who inserted “his own blocks of composition which concludes each of the three sections: Hos 3, Hos

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<sup>12</sup> J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 18–19; Simundson, *Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah*, 2; Wolff, *Hosea*, xxix–xxxii. This book was originally published in 1965 as Hans W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 1: Hosea* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1961). Citations refer to the English-Language edition.

<sup>13</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, xxxi.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

11 and Hos 14.”<sup>15</sup> For Yee, the final redactor shaped the divisions with a particular motif that ensures the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel. Her analysis of the redactional history of the book is to recognize four stages in the composition of the book, which includes the first stage of the prophet Hosea himself, the second stage of the collector, the third stage of the first redactor, and the fourth stage of the final redactor, and her interpretation is mainly based on the three part structure. Nevertheless, Yee’s redactional composition of three motif blocks overlooks Hosea’s coherent message throughout the book, so that the core message has been torn apart into the very different time settings.

Nevertheless, those scholarly assumptions of pursuing divisions by the ending of each section, as it concludes with a promise of restoration, is problematic. In his book, *The Twelve Prophets*, Marvin Sweeney criticizes how other scholars overlook the various prophetic announcements. He states that “[p]rophecy did not represent one consistent theological position, but many.... As part of public discussion, prophets announced either judgment or salvation, depending on how they viewed YHWH’s intentions and the choices for action that people might take.”<sup>16</sup> Sweeney clearly argues that the conceptualization of the prophetic message of judgment and hope into one specific life setting is a dangerous approach to the text because prophecy appears to be a more complex phenomenon.

Scholarly arguments on the structural division above show how scholars understand the structure of the book of Hosea, and I argue that their view is problematic

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<sup>15</sup> Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, 51.

<sup>16</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:11.

in that they overlook the literary features of the book in its final form and depend only on redaction critical criteria which focuses on the book's compositional history. In particular, the scholarly focus on the marriage metaphor, which is generally separated from the whole text on the basis of the narrative literary form as well as a thematic concern of Hosea's marriage, seems to ignore significant literary characters, especially the narrative voice in the text. In his article, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," Sweeney asserts that the text identifies the speaker and addressee of a particular pericope and scholars have to think about how these literary features work in the text.<sup>17</sup> According to Sweeney, it is true that a form critical reading of Hosea based on its formal syntactical and semantic features in the book provides a very different reading of the structure. Sweeney's observations ring true to me because the divisions by the voice markers in the text are seriously unmatched with previous scholarly divisions. Several considerations concerning the form of the book provide for why the previous structural divisions are not valid and hinder proper engagement of the texts as a whole.

First, although scholars generally group Hos 1 and 3 together, I agree with Sweeney that the narrative voice in each chapter is very different and such indication plays a significant role in constituting the structure of the book. For example, Hos 1 is YHWH's message in first person to Hosea in an objective form, whereas the narrative in Hos 3 is an autobiographical report of Hosea. Hos 2 is also interesting in that the voice markers beginning in Hos 2:3–4 [NRSV 2:1–2]<sup>18</sup> appear to be an address to the people of

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<sup>17</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," *JHS* 2 (1999): 1.

<sup>18</sup> There are differences in the verse numbering between MT and English translations of the Bible. This dissertation follows the MT verse numbers. I will use

Israel by Hosea using an imperative plural form in poetic style, “Say to your brothers, ‘*Ammi*,’ and to your sisters, ‘*Ruhamah*.’ Contend with your mother! Contend! For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband,”<sup>19</sup> whereas Hos 2:1–2 [1:10–1:11] is clearly continuing text from Hos 1 in the objective form. Therefore, the structure of the book has to be reinterpreted. In other words, Hos 1:2–2:2 [1:2–1:11] is addressed by the narrator to the reader,<sup>20</sup> while Hos 2:3–3:5 [2:1–3:5] is addressed by the prophet to the people of Israel in Hos 2:3–25 [2:1–23] and to the reader in Hos 3:1–5, which narrates objectively about the people of Israel. For Sweeney, this suggests that Hos 1–3 cannot be viewed as a single section but as two textual sections addressed by different parties to different audiences.<sup>21</sup>

Second, Hos 4–11 contains many introductory address formulae which specify their audiences with whom Hosea is critically troubled. The address formulae generally take an imperative form but other variation also appears in a similar sense.<sup>22</sup> According to Sweeney, the first address is presented as “Hear, the word of YHWH (שְׁמָעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה)” in Hos 4:1 to the people of Israel. The second address points to the various political groups

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brackets to indicate verse numbers in English New Revised Standard Version when there is a discrepancy in the chapter.

<sup>19</sup> Translations are mine throughout this study unless noted.

<sup>20</sup> The superscription in Hos 1:1 has to be separated from the following material in that it plays an important role in introducing its contents, author, and the historical setting of the book.

<sup>21</sup> Sweeney, “A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea,” 2.

<sup>22</sup> The imperative plural form of the speech appears in Hos 2:3, 4; 3:1; 4:1, 18; 5:1, 8; 6:1; 10:8, 12; and 14:3. In the same function, a verb ellipsis appears in 8:1. Jussive form is used in 9:1. These forms are important as voice markers of the prophet indicating his speeches concerning the appeal for Israel’s return.

such as the priest (הַכֹּהֲנִים), the house of Israel (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), and kings (הַמְּלָכִים) in Hos 5:1. The third address includes unspecified audiences nuanced by using an imperative plural verb (תִּקְעוּ) in Hos 5:8 and a second person singular suffix (אֶל־תִּקְדָּךְ) in Hos 8:1. In addition, Hos 9:1 addresses the people of Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל). These introductory addresses are spread out throughout these chapters indicating that the words of YHWH or the proclamations of the prophet are presented to each different audience on purpose. Therefore, the role of these addresses clearly intends to separate each section with descriptive material to designate a specific problem in the midst of the people of Israel.

Third, in the same way, Hos 14:2 [14:1] contains an address formula in an imperative verb form, stated “Return, Israel! (שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל)” in order to call for Israel’s repentance. Sweeney notes that Hos 12–14 also displays an address formula in the midst of those chapters so the simple division of the chapters does not make sense to understand the book of Hosea.

Fourth, in addition to the analysis of the overall structure of the book, several observations concerning the form of the book are necessary. The superscription in Hos 1:1 has to be separated from the body of the book. The superscription clearly describes the historical setting of the book including the list of kings in Israel and Judah, its author, and explanation of what the text is. Therefore, it cannot be Hosea’s own writing but the introductory report of an anonymous narrator who intentionally indicates some information to the reader. Also, the narrator continues to indicate YHWH’s speeches to the prophet in Hos 1:2a, “The beginning of YHWH’s speaking to Hosea,” and in Hos 1:2ba, “YHWH said to him,” showing that this is the work of the narrator; in Hos 1:3–4a, “So he went and married Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a

son. And YHWH said to him” continuing the narrator’s explanation of the prophet’s responses and actions; in Hos 6αβ, “And again she conceived and bore a daughter. Then YHWH said to him,”; in Hos 8–9α, “When she had weaned ‘Lo-Ruhamah,’ she conceived and bore a son. And YHWH said,”; and in Hos 2:1–3 [1:10–2:1], “Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea which cannot be measured and cannot be counted. And in the place where it was said to them ‘You are not my people,’ it will be said to them, ‘Sons of the Living God.’ ... Say to your brothers, ‘Ammi,’ and to your sisters, ‘Ruhamah.’” The narrative speech of YHWH to the prophet clearly stops in Hos 2:3 [2:1] and the prophet begins his address to the children and continually to Israel or other various audiences until Hos 14:10 [14:9]. Next, Hos 14:10ab, which is the final verse of the book, provides again the narrator’s address to the reader, “those who are wise understand these things; those who are discerning know them. For the ways of YHWH are right....” Overall, it is noteworthy that the anonymous narrator plays a significant role in constituting the overall structure and the generic character of the book of Hosea. Therefore, the structure of the book constitutes three textual blocks and each block is formulated by the anonymous narrator: Hos 1:1; Hos 1:2–14:9 [14:8]; and Hos 14:10 [14:9].

In sum, the preceding discussion about the structure and generic character of the book of Hosea leads to some observations. First, I disagree with the previous structural views that divide the book into two or three thematic textual blocks based on redaction critical method. Such reading presupposes an original judgmental material developed to an expended material with later additions because, as above research has shown, they misread the overall intention of Hosea reflected in the book from the beginning to the end.

Such divisions might provide a basis to focus on the analysis of each division as twentieth-century scholars have been appreciated for their various approaches such as feminist criticism, redaction criticism, and form criticism. Nevertheless, due to the misunderstanding of the overall structure of the book, scholarly analysis of the book has been biased. Second, Hos 1–3 is not a separated or separable material. It is intended to provide background information on Hosea and his interaction with textual characters as a basis to understand the whole book. The structure of the book, therefore, contains three basic components: the superscription in Hos 1:1; the body of the work in Hos 1:2–14:9 [14:8]; and the concluding exhortation to the reader in Hos 14:10 [14:9].

According to Sweeney, Hosea's marriage to Gomer as the initial introductory report sets "the basic paradigm for the portrayal of Israel as an adulterous wife whose husband seeks her return."<sup>23</sup> Sweeney continues to assert that following the paradigm, the contents of the book after the initial report provide "an extended analysis of northern Israel's behavior that indicates its abandonment of YHWH together with repeated statements by YHWH and the prophet that Israel will be punished but that YHWH will also seek Israel's return."<sup>24</sup> Basically, Sweeney is saying that the contents of the body of the book, which are Hos 1:2–14:9 [14:8], coherently intercommunicate together in order to appeal for Israel's return to YHWH. In other words, he believes that the book intends to deliver Hosea's message in didactic or parenetic voice so that the book persuades its readers to take necessary actions. Another scholar, Ehud Ben Zvi, also demarcates the

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<sup>23</sup> Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," 9.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



book into the same three divisions in his book, *Hosea*.<sup>25</sup> Ben Zvi believes that the book of Hosea is a very sophisticated literary prophetic book because “it is a self-contained literary unit with a clear beginning and conclusion that shows a significant degree of textual coherence and distinctiveness.”<sup>26</sup> In the body of the book, Ben Zvi finds a common metanarrative which includes a set of concepts: a) YHWH chose Israel; b) Israel broke its relationship with YHWH; c) YHWH punished Israel but still loved Israel; d) so YHWH will bring this relationship back. He observes that:

As the book is taken as a whole, different stages in this metanarrative are revisited again and again, each time from a different perspective, and through various images, each of which provides a slightly different insight. The matter is not one of redundancy at all, but of constructing a more sophisticated multilayered approach to these matters through an interwoven tapestry of the individual threads represented by constructions, and images that appear in particular readings or sections of readings.<sup>27</sup>

The essence of Ben Zvi’s argument is that the “metanarrative” manifested in various images, references, and proclamations is a working device to hold the core message throughout the book as the reader of the book reads, rereads, and studies it. Although he dates this writing in postmonarchic Israel or later based on his interpretation of the literary feature in the overall text, he ignores Hosea’s original writing. However, the structural view of reading the features or continuity of the book is noteworthy.

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<sup>25</sup> Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, FOTL XXIA/1 (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

In sum, my point is that when we understand the synchronic and diachronic organization and presentation of the book, readers finally see that the previous structural divisions hinder proper interpretation, and that Hos 1–14 is structured together to point out Hosea's idea step by step until the end. Therefore, the previous divisional understanding of Hosea does not support interpretation of the book as a whole. By using the narrative voice throughout the book in relation to the metaphorical image of idolatry in Hos 1–3, Hosea appeals to Israel, and later redactor may readdress Hosea's words as a lesson for the new audience of Judah in relation to their circumstance.

#### 2.1.2. Is the Book of Hosea a religious text or a political text?

Scholars assume that the overall interpretation of the Book of Hosea as a religious text strongly proclaims that Israel's apostasy toward YHWH is the focal point of the book. For them, Hosea is calling upon the people to return to YHWH. The problem in this assumption is that this reading neglects Hosea's original purpose of the argument. A number of scholars have recently suggested that the goal of the book of Hosea is to proclaim his religious passion to the people of Israel like other prophets or ancestors who usually intended to do this in the Hebrew Bible. In particular, interpreters generally understand that the relationship between Hosea and Gomer in the marriage metaphor implies the relationship between YHWH and Israel. The female sexual imagery used by Hosea is understood as a metaphorical representation of Israel's religious apostasy. Some scholars believe that this apostasy involves Canaanite or syncretistic cultic worship of Baal and the Canaanite fertility goddesses. Of course, many elements in the narrative

seem to appeal to the people pointing out their apostasy as participation in a fertility cult dedicated to the foreign gods. For example, in the marriage metaphor, the prophet accuses Gomer of adultery as she has pursued an adulterous affair with her lover, Baal, believing him to be the provider of her grain, wine, and oil. Similarly, YHWH accuses Israel of their apostasy seeking other gods and brings punishment upon their wrongdoings. For some scholars, Israel's apostasy involves cultic prostitution or ritual sex acts intended to promote fertility through sympathetic magic. Some scholars propose that Hosea's imagery of marriage between a deity and his people arises out of Canaanite religion, but that the prophet understands YHWH's marriage to Israel as representing the historical and legal covenant relationship begun at Sinai. Nevertheless, these readings miss important points in the interpretation of the book. Four scholarly issues on the topic must be considered.

First, scholars such as Mays argue that the main focus of the book of Hosea is the religious conflict between Baalism and Yahwism in eighth-century BCE. For example, Mays insists that throughout the whole book, "the cult and mythology of the god Baal is the foil of most of Hosea's sayings."<sup>28</sup> Mays urges us that Hosea's condemnation toward Israel's wrongdoings and syncretistic modification of Yahwism influenced by Baalism is clear in the text. For Mays, Hosea utilizes the motifs and practices of the Canaanite cult to teach the relationship between YHWH and Israel, to accuse Israel's sinful behavior, and to portray the future that YHWH will restore. Basically, Mays is saying that Hosea's use of the sexual motifs is prominent for him in order to condemn the people whose religious practices are influenced very much by the mythology of the fertility cult.

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<sup>28</sup> Mays, *Hosea*, 8.

Second, the problematic notion of “the love of God” has been interpreted by Hosea scholars to understand that Gomer’s transgression is revealed as transgression against the love of God.<sup>29</sup> Hosea describes a loving God’s continuous struggle with his stubborn people. Furthermore, the statement, “she goes after her lovers” in Hosea 2:5, 7, and 13 is interpreted as a religious ritual that points to a cultic procession within the sanctuary. Most notably, Hans Walter Wolff in his commentary, *Hosea*, argues that Hosea’s issue is to “indicate how Hosea’s God, in profound sorrow, laments the apostasy of his people.”<sup>30</sup> Wolff notices that Hosea uses YHWH much more frequently than God, seeking to bear witness to the power, strength, and prompt action of YHWH who has revealed himself in the liberating acts from the tradition of Exodus: “I am YHWH, your God from the land of Egypt” in Hos 12:10 [12:9].<sup>31</sup> Along with this focus on Yahwism in the context, Wolff observes that Hosea uses “the *mythologumenon* of YHWH” as Israel’s husband in order to judge Israel’s guilt as stated, “for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the Lord” in Hos 1:1; 2:4–7 [2–5]; 3:3; 4:10–18; 5:3; 6:10; 9:1.<sup>32</sup> Wolff argues that from the time when the old Canaanite cities were united under David’s power, the Canaanite sex rituals and its cults had a powerful influence on Israel’s religious practice. In his view, a profusion of Canaanite fertility cults appears in the use of “the land” in Hos

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<sup>29</sup> See. Wolff, *Hosea*, xxvi–xxvii.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, xxviii.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvi. Wolff finds comparable points between Hosea’s allegory and Canaanite mythology. Wolff states, “the wife represents the land; her children represent its inhabitants, the offspring of the marriage between the land and the god of heaven. Hosea employs this imagery to demonstrate that the arable land inhabited by Israel owes its fertility only to its intimate relationship with Yahweh.”

1:2 where the land represents a Mother Goddess who became fertile by receiving rain from a youthful god (the Baal of heaven or a local Baal). This motif based on the Canaanite sexual rituals is present in Hosea's accusation. Wolff's point is that Hosea asserts Israel's unfaithfulness to YHWH by their cultic practices and dependence upon Canaanite mythology and thought.<sup>33</sup> Wolff notes that "the metaphor of the 'first husband' thus has the purpose of elucidating the accusation that Israel is guilty of whoredom and adultery."<sup>34</sup> In Wolff's view, Hosea's use of the metaphor which presents the divine husband concept asserts YHWH as the only God who exclusively takes care of Israel.

Third, another interpretation of Hosea's sexual imagery involves examination of the material and socio-political conditions of Israel in the eighth century BCE. Scholars, such as Alice Keefe and Gale Yee focus on these issues, with Keefe, for example, viewing the wife's fornication as representing the desire of Israel's elite to form political alliances with foreign nations and a state economy based on latifundial agriculture.<sup>35</sup> The highland villagers and lowland peasantry are exploited to produce surplus cash crops for the royal administration. Yee also argues that surpluses of grain, wine, and oil are used to pay domestic and foreign tribute or traded for luxury items and military supplies.<sup>36</sup> Alice

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Alice A. Keefe, "The Female Body, the Body Politic and the Land: A Sociopolitical Reading of Hosea 1-2," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 92.

<sup>36</sup> Gale A. Yee, "'She Is Not My Wife and I Am Not Her Husband': A Materialist Analysis of Hosea 1-2," *BibInt* 9, no. 4 (2001): 347; Phyllis A. Bird, "The End of the Male Cult Prostitute: A Literary-Historical and Sociological Analysis of Hebrew Qādēš-Qēdēšîm," in *Congress Volume: Cambridge, 1995*, SupVT 66 (New York, NY: Brill,

Keefe proposes that breakdown of the traditional kinship based socio-political structure and its corresponding values results in excessive violence and societal disintegration.<sup>37</sup>

Following Keefe and Yee's argument, Hosea's imagery of fornication is not viewed as condemnation of popular religion involving worship of fertility goddesses; rather, his denunciation is targeted against the official cult of the state that legitimates these exploitative socio-political structures. Gale Yee notes that there is little direct evidence that cultic prostitution existed or was practiced in the Ancient Near East.<sup>38</sup> She argues that Hosea's charge of female sexual harlotry is a means of denigrating Israel's elite for their exploitative administrative policies and cultic transgressions.<sup>39</sup> Israel's elite is portrayed as inferior to and distinct from the YHWH-alone group advocated by Hosea.<sup>40</sup>

This present interpretation of Hosea's family metaphor incorporates the material and socio-political conditions of Israel in the eighth century BCE as analyzed by scholars such as Yee and Keefe. According to this perspective, fornication in Hosea's metaphor represents the practices of Israel's religious and socio-political elite that exploit and oppress the highland villagers and lowland peasants for state agribusiness. These practices are associated with the cult of Baal in order to promote the prophet's theology

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1997), 37–80. Bird argues that a class of male cult prostitutes in ancient Israel does not have any ground in literary, linguistic, and sociological studies.

<sup>37</sup> Keefe, "The Female Body, the Body Politic and the Land," 76.

<sup>38</sup> Yee, "She Is Not My Wife and I Am Not Her Husband," 354.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 354.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 357.

of polemical monolatry.<sup>41</sup> Hosea relies on the Exodus tradition and the exclusive covenant relationship between Israel and YHWH to support veneration of YHWH alone. He further bolsters his theology by using ironic references and allusions to Israelite rulers who profess to be zealous Yahwists, but who behave like violent foreign deities.

Fourth and finally, some scholars suggest that Hosea's metaphor may no longer be an acceptable means of communicating God's relationship with his people,<sup>42</sup> or alternatively, should be read with resistance.<sup>43</sup> Many feminist scholars are concerned with the ideological message in a metaphor that portrays YHWH as the authoritative patriarch who batters his wife into submission and utterly humiliates her. The metaphorical representation of apostate Israel as a woman of harlotries ostensibly reinforces the perception that women cannot control their sexual passions and thus they must be controlled and mastered. After the wife has been beaten and abused, the husband can seduce her back into a "loving" relationship. Scholars such as Carole Fontaine express concern, not only about Hosea's "patriarchal agendas," but even more about the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>42</sup> Naomi Graetz and Harold C. Washington, "God Is to Israel as Husband Is to Wife: The Metaphoric Battering of Hosea's Wife," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 145.

<sup>43</sup> Pamela Gordon and Harold C. Washington, "Rape as a Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 324.

potential of the fused voice of God, the narrator, and the prophet to “seduce the unwary” into violence.<sup>44</sup>

As seen in the discussion above, many scholars easily assume that this religious apostasy of Israel is the main context of the book of Hosea and seek a connection with Hosea’s message of salvation. However, does the scholarly argument I have cited prove conclusively that the book of Hosea is talking about the religious apostasy of Israel at all? In other words, how does the marriage metaphor persuade readers rhetorically to insist the right path to YHWH, adhering to the proper religious practice? Here many feminists would probably object to the use of female sexual imagery to present religious apostasy. It is because we will never know if she/Israel indeed betrayed her husband. Sweeney points out that Gomer or Israel do not have any chance to speak to defend themselves and that the portrayal of Gomer in the book “does not tell the full story.” He writes,

Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the book of Hosea explains this reality theologically by arguing that Israel sinned against YHWH. Hosea raises a question of theodicy to the modern reader in a personally pointed way, viz., did Israel sin by failing to be true to YHWH, or did YHWH sin by failing to be true to Israel? In the case of the latter, YHWH would not be the first husband who failed his wife and tried to cover his actions by accusing her of adultery.<sup>45</sup>

Is Gomer’s wrong behavior in the marriage metaphor reflecting Israel’s religious apostasy? In his book, *Hosea*, Stuart asserts that with many problems and uncertainty

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<sup>44</sup> Carole R. Fontaine, “A Response to Hosea,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 64.

<sup>45</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:6.



about Hosea's family life in the narrative story, "all details serve the interest of the divine message of wrath and redemption and are inextricably woven into that message."<sup>46</sup> In other words, Stuart argues that the general interpretation of Gomer as a "promiscuous wife" cannot be identified in the text. He states that "nothing is ever actually stated about Gomer's profession or fidelity" and Gomer's metaphorical reference (אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים) in Hos 1:2 cannot be taken as "a literal statement of her profession or practice."<sup>47</sup> Stuart observes that the metaphor is indeed not fully explained to complete an argument persuasively, and that the focus of the narrative is to bring the relationship between God and Israel beside Hosea's family.<sup>48</sup>

I suggest that the marriage metaphor sets a paradigm based on Gomer's wrong behavior in relation to Hosea as the basic problem in the relationship between Israel and YHWH. Therefore, religious apostasy reflected in the text is one of several important themes. Moreover, it is clear when the text accuses the priests and prophets for their failure to properly make the people adhere to the knowledge of YHWH and walk through the path of YHWH. The text also frequently refers to Israel's cultic sites as places for illicit worship of pagan deities. However, I argue that Hosea's message is not entirely a religious issue, but it is also a political issue. Most scholars think that Hosea is talking about religious apostasy and accusing that Israelites are going after another god such as Baal. But, scholars are missing that much of the context deals with the question, "with whom do you ally?" The reading of marriage motif in relation to the covenant and treaty

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<sup>46</sup> Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC 31 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1987), 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 12.

texts in Ancient Near East provides a new insight that supports Hosea's political interest reflected in his metaphor and Pentateuchal citations.

### 2.1.3. Debate on Hosea's political standpoint toward kingship

The relationship between Hosea and the institution of kingship has been regarded as an important discussion in traditional historical study. Scholars have interests to see Hosea's social and political background reflected in the text. There are five different groups that argue their own opinions. The first group of scholars, such as Wolff and Mays, sees that Hosea rejects the entire development of kingship and show a strong anti-monarchical mood. According to Wolff, Hosea speaks "no legitimation of the rulers" and the kingship was "established by men, without YHWH."<sup>49</sup> Wolff believes that Hosea criticizes kingship harshly in the text, opposing its entire concept and system in principle. Mays also suggests that Hosea rejects the development of kingship as "a focus of power independent of YHWH"<sup>50</sup> and states that Hosea's rejection sounds like "an echo of the old anti-monarchical source in the early chapters of Samuel (1 Sam 8:6)."<sup>51</sup> Hosea's attitude toward kingship was discussed explicitly in relation to the text which talks about the inappropriate behaviours or conducts of kingship in political, military, and cultic activities (for example, 2:1–2 [1:10–11]; 5:1–2, 10; 7:3–5, 16; 8:1–6; 9:15; 10:1–4, 7–8, 15). In particular, the description of Hosea 8:4, "they made kings, but not through me,"

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<sup>49</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, 139, 227.

<sup>50</sup> Mays, *Hosea*, 117.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

and Hos 13:10, “where now is your king, that he may save you?” is representative of interpretations of Hosea’s overall view on kingship that most scholars consider to be Hosea’s attitude. Along with this main view, scholars observe Hosea’s attitude toward kingship in several different ways.

The second group of scholars believes that Hosea specially criticizes the northern monarchy and their illegitimacy. Scholars with redaction historical approach view that most Judean redactions appear to be the main voices opposing the northern kingship. In particular, A. Macintosh clearly observes that Hosea speaks his contemporary situation, but the question is whether Hosea also refers to “the whole history of the kingship in Ephraim from the time of Jeroboam I.”<sup>52</sup> For Macintosh, Hosea concludes that the northern kingship is entirely “unacceptable to YHWH.”<sup>53</sup> In comparison, Grace Emmerson, in her book, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*, argues that it is not clear whether Hosea condemns kingship as an institution, but Hosea obviously “condemns north Israelite kingship as it had in practice become, and possibly also in principle.”<sup>54</sup> However, she does not assume that the references of David as the best model of the kingship are due to Judean influence. For Emmerson, Hosea objects to northern Israelite kingship as a hereditary monarchy such as the Davidic is desirable in order to sustain stable government.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 299.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Grace Emmerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1984), 112.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 105–113.

In the third opinion, some scholars believe that Hosea only criticizes specific kings due to their acts of disobedience and does not object kingship in principle. Anthony Gelston, for example, believes that Hosea's criticism was directed primarily against "the actual contemporary monarchy of northern Israel"<sup>56</sup> rather than an opposition to the kingship in principle. In particular, John Hayes and Jeffrey Kuan argue that scholars generally understand that Hos 8:4a refers to "they made kings," but the hiphil form of the verb *mlk* means "to make someone king." Thus, Hayes and Kuan stress out that "Hosea was not opposed to kingship in principle," and that the Bethel cult is also not the target of Hosea's criticism.<sup>57</sup> Rather, Hayes and Kuan argue that the reference of "king" in Hos 13:10 is probably King Hoshea based on their historical exegesis and conclude that Hoshea is the main target of Hosea's criticism.<sup>58</sup>

In the fourth group, some scholars such as Henry Cazelles and H. Nyberg discover that the "king" in the text does not refer to royal personages and military leaders,<sup>59</sup> with Nyberg, for example, concluding that King Jareb (*mlk yrb*) in Hos 5:13 is not a human king but a deity called Melek as the text describes people seeking a god for healing. Nyberg argues that "*mlk* im Hoseabueche fast durchgängig der bekannte

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<sup>56</sup> Anthony Gelston, "Kingship in the Book of Hosea," in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, ed. A. S. Van der Woude, OtSt 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 84–85.

<sup>57</sup> John H. Hayes and Jeffrey K. Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria (730-720 BC)," *Bib* 72, no. 2 (1991): 85–86.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>59</sup> Henri Cazelles, "Problem of the Kings in Osee 8:4," *CBQ* 11, no. 1 (January 1949): 14–25; Henrik Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabueche: zugleich ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Problems der Alttestamentlichen Textkritik* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1935).

Gottesname zu sein scheint.”<sup>60</sup> For Nyberg, the word *mlk* in Hosea denotes “Ba’al” which is “vorwiegend ein Stadtgott.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the word *mlk* relates to a religious apostasy rather than a political issue toward kingship.

In the fifth, scholars, such as Heinz-Dieter Neef and Sweeney, argue that Hosea does not reject the monarchy in and of itself. Neef insists that Hosea only criticizes “the complete contempt for divine justice among the kings.”<sup>62</sup> Sweeney generally agrees with the view that Hosea deals with the corrupt Israelite kings who entered into a relationship with the Assyrian kings and so betrayed their relationship with YHWH. Thus, Sweeney sees that Hosea generally condemns northern Israel’s monarchy.<sup>63</sup> However, Sweeney believes that Hosea specifically criticizes the dynasty of King Jehu (842-815) and claims that the overall interpretation of the dating of the book of Hosea during the time of the Assyrian’s actual assault is problematic. For Sweeney, the narrative about Hosea’s family particularly emphasizes the point because Hosea’s son, Jezreel, is named “for the site at which Jehu killed the Omride King Jehoram and his mother Jezebel in order to portray YHWH’s disrupted relationship with Israel.”<sup>64</sup> Sweeney believes that the social background of the book of Hosea has to be related with the house of Jehu so as to be Hosea’s main criticism.

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<sup>60</sup> Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 39.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>62</sup> Heinz-Dieter Neef, “Hosea, Book of,” ed. John H. Hayes, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 525.

<sup>63</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:4, 87, 133.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 1:4.

Among those views, I believe that Sweeney's argument best represents Hosea's position; Hosea was highly interested in political situation of his day which I regard as the original core message of the book of Hosea.

#### 2.1.4. Debate on the dating of the book of Hosea

The dating of the book of Hosea is another important point in this dissertation as I argue that Hosea puts forward his own view of political situation to the leadership due to King Jehu's indiscreet political alliance with Assyria, practiced by the dynasty of Jehu. The materials in the book of Hosea provide the reader with various information of Hosea's time period in the history of Israel. Most scholars generally pay attention to the reference of cities and sanctuaries, the contents of the prophetic judgments, especially toward kingship, and social background reflected in the text such as the Syro-Ephraimite war.

Scholars such as Wilhelm Rudolph<sup>65</sup>, James Mays<sup>66</sup>, and Jörg Jeremias<sup>67</sup> believe that the book was written during 750 BCE to 722 BCE and was soon finalized as the present form by an editor or redactors in Judah, the book. Others such as Douglas Stuart agree with the dating of the book but are strongly aware that positing any part in the book as inauthentic has no firm ground.<sup>68</sup> Reading the text as written 750-722 BCE became a

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<sup>65</sup> Rudolph, *Hosea*, 19–27.

<sup>66</sup> Mays, *Hosea*, 1–17.

<sup>67</sup> Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*.

<sup>68</sup> Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 10–13, 15.

typical interpretation of the dating of the book of Hosea. For example, in his book, *Hosea*, Wilhelm Rudolph complains about the former scholarly opinions of localizing Hosea in Benjamin, regarding him as a priest or a cultic prophet, or even a farmer, and insists that these do not have any background from the text.<sup>69</sup> However, considering the time of effectiveness of Hosea's statements, Rudolph certainly agrees that "[Hosea] er noch unter Jerobeam II. aufgetreten ist"<sup>70</sup> because the text supposes that the country's prosperity and security prevails (2:4–15; 8:14; 10:1, 13b–15; 12:8–10).<sup>71</sup> Moreover, for Rudolph, Hosea has witnessed the extinction of the house of Jehu as the text probably indicates the Syro-Ephraimite war (5:8–6:6), kings' death (7:3–7), and changes of Israel's alliances (7:8–16; 9:3–6; 8:8–10). However, the destruction of Israel still lies in the future in Hos 14:1. Therefore, Rudolph concludes that "hat also Hosea von etwa 750 bis 722 gewirkt."<sup>72</sup> After the fall of Samaria, the book was brought to Judah and assembled there with some additions to the present book as Judean redactors were interested in the content and heritage of the book. In other words, Rudolph believes that Hosea's prophetic ministry was valued by Judean redactors.

In the same vein, Mays also suggests that Hosea's prophetic ministry began during the peaceful time of Jeroboam II and ceased shortly before the fall of Samaria and before the record about Hosea's prophecy was brought to Judah. Then, the book was

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<sup>69</sup> Rudolph, *Hosea*, 22–25.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

finalized with minimal additions by an editor or group based on the “direct guidance from Israelites who knew Hosea.”<sup>73</sup>

In short, Rudolph and Mays agree with the dating of the book but think that the transmission of the book after the fall of Samaria is a different scenario. According to both Rudolph and Mays, Hosea’s prophetic ministry was from a few years before the death of Jereboam II to the time before the fall of Samaria, and the final editing of the book was done in Judah during the following years.

This traditional interpretation of the dating of the book of Hosea is questioned by some scholars such as Wolff, Andersen and Freedman, and A. MacIntosh, who argue the editorial addition occurred during the period from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE through the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. These scholarly discussions acknowledge the fourteen references of Judah and pay attention to the description criticizing leaderships or the book’s social setting. In 1974, Wolff published his work, *Hosea*, which challenged the early dating of the work of the Judean redactor. Wolff agrees with Rudolph and Mays on Hosea’s actual time of activity during the time period (750-722). However, Wolff rejects the argument that the book of Hosea was finished in Judah soon after the fall of Samaria because he believes that the restoration motif cannot be a product during such a time period and that the motif is a later addition. Wolff argues that there are three large complexes of transmission identified in the text: 1) Hos 1:2–6, 8f; 2:1–3:5, 2) Hos 4:1a–11:11bβ 3) Hos 12–14. He argues that they each are governed by the major theme that moves “from accusation to threat, and then to the proclamation of salvation.”<sup>74</sup> For Wolff, each complex might be

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<sup>73</sup> Mays, *Hosea*, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, xxxi.



written by different writers, but they all belong to the same circle of Hosea's contemporary followers who Wolff regards as "the forerunners of the Deuteronomic movement" because they show similar connections between "the Hosean traditions and the language and theology of Deuteronomy."<sup>75</sup> Wolff finds many evidences of redactional steps and claims that the transmission process which connects between Hosea and Deuteronomy "spans the time from the early Deuteronomic movement down to the Deuteronomistic circles of the exilic period."<sup>76</sup> Therefore, he argues that the book of Hosea was composed over a period of about two hundred years and when the superscription in Hos 1:1 was added, the three complexes of long transmission were combined together to form the final text. As I previously noted, I think Wolff's understanding of the proclamation of salvation in the text as the redaction product of the Deuteronomistic circles is mistaken because he overlooks the importance of Hosea's prophecy of the salvation as a suggestion or a political gesture in order to rhetorically persuade leadership in his time.

Similarly, Andersen and Freedman suggest that Hosea's active ministry was from 760 BCE to about 735 BCE, with mostly centered from 755 BCE to 740 BCE. Their argument is based on the fact: 1) the text witnesses the latter years of Joeroboam II and the years of turmoil after Jeroboam's death, 2) the political turmoil would not be beyond the house of Menahem, 3) the Syro-Ephraimite war is not the scope of Hosea's oracles, 4) the fall of Samaria is also still in the future.<sup>77</sup> Believing that there were some faithful

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., xxix–xxxii.

<sup>77</sup> Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 33–39.

disciples or followers who collected, organized, and edited the surviving materials, Andersen and Freedman argue that the book of Hosea delivers didactic messages for those who lived at a later time and for the book's application. In this scenario, in relation to various tragic moments such as the context of Josiah's reform program, his death and its consequences, and the Babylonian captivity, Andersen and Freedman note that the written record including the message of the prophets and historians played an important role in studying and reflecting the story of Israel to serve as a definitive lesson in theology.<sup>78</sup> They believe that during the Exile, a substantial part of old prophecies was edited and blended with later prophetic oracles to convey a message for the people to overcome their difficulties, and the final book of Hosea was edited during the Babylonian Exile.<sup>79</sup>

Another scholar, A. MacIntosh, also agrees with Wolff and argues that the book was edited over the course of two centuries, especially focused and actively edited during the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>80</sup> He states that the Judean redactors of 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE edited the materials to serve their own needs, and some glosses were added by exilic and post-exilic redactor. Lastly, MacIntosh believes that the superscription and the final verse were added to indicate the book's authenticity. Basically, MacIntosh is suggesting that the book has been edited by many hands.

On the contrary, in his book published in 1983, *Der Prophet Hosea*, Jörg Jeremias agrees when he notes that Hosea himself is responsible for some part of the writings in

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>80</sup> Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, lxxiii–lxxiv.

the type of “*memorable*” as Wolff suggests.<sup>81</sup> Yet, the oracles of the prophets always have messages of judgment and restoration. Thus, Jeremias does not agree with Wolff’s attempt to connect the Hosea tradition with Deuteronomistic tradition seeking later editorial redaction. Rather, Jeremias argues that the text presumably predates the fall of Samaria, but in Judah, the various Hosean materials were combined and the biographical section was added. And finally, based on the need of Judean viewpoint of the Israelite history and its aftermath, one or more revisions were performed and Hosea includes some part of the references of Judah.<sup>82</sup> Conclusively, Jeremias argues that in these steps of redaction, “le livre d’Osée comportait déjà tous les éléments qui le constituent actuellement.”<sup>83</sup> Basically, Jeremias is saying that the book of Hosea was fully completed in Judah right after the fall of Samaria, believing that the book would provide a didactic lesson to the people of Judah.

More advanced studies focused on redaction criticism can be found in the studies of Emmerson and Yee. They thoroughly develop the emphasis on editorial hands with their particular intention. In her book, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*, Emmerson exams the expressions of future hope, references to the southern kingdom, and examples of polemic voice against the cult practices and sanctuaries of the northern kingdom, believing that these will show how Judean redactional activity was carried out. In this regard, she finds out that on the one hand, from Hosea in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the emphasis of the text was concerned with “God’s sovereign freedom to act in salvation

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<sup>81</sup> Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 12–13.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 13.

even when man is totally undeserving.”<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, the later Judean redaction focuses on “the importance of man’s response to the summons to repent, the need for an act of will.”<sup>85</sup> Mostly, Emmerson argues that the Judean reworking of the original materials is not a simple overlay of extending Hosea’s message, but is a new task to reshape the original messages to bring new emphases in relation to the social settings that the redactors observe.

Similarly, in her book, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, Yee deals with some of same criteria that Emmerson uses and argues that there are four stages in the composition of the book.<sup>86</sup> Yee believes that the later stages always revised and reinterpreted the earlier stages, highlighting “the unity from the different phases of the tradition.”<sup>87</sup> She argues that the editorial stages span from Hosea, especially focused on the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war, to a final redactor in the exilic period.<sup>88</sup> The previous approach represented by Emmerson and Yee is valuable as an attempt to identify an intentionality and coherence in the final form of Hosea against the argument that identifies the same book as a loosely connected composition of disparate materials.

Concerning the most recent scholarship on the book of Hosea, there are strong arguments focusing on the exilic production of the book as the only possible option.

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<sup>84</sup> Emmerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*, 164.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> See previous discussion about the four stages of redaction on page 4 (Cf. §4.2.3.3.).

<sup>87</sup> Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, 305.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 305–313.

Some scholars even incorporate socio-political studies to support their arguments. One example, Jakob Wöhrle argues that Pentateuchal references such as the Jacob narrative, the Exodus narrative, and the Wilderness narrative in Hosea 12 show disruptive syntax which points to later additions to the book of Hosea. He believes that the book of Hosea is an exilic product, combined with Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah.<sup>89</sup> Wöhrle's understanding of the four exilic books is to hear the literary debate from the time of exile. He insists that the purpose of the books is to reinterpret the "unsolidary behavior" of the social upper class against the poor, confirming that the future restoration is reserved for the poor remnant of the land, not for the upper class or returnees.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, Wöhrle situates the content of the book of Hosea in the exilic time period. In my opinion, Wöhrle's argument basically ignores any possibility of the use of Hosea's Pentateuchal citations in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE. However, Hosea is actively using the Pentateuchal citations to support his political viewpoint, involving what it meant to ally with Assyria and what it meant to propose alliance with Aram instead in the narratives.

Another example, in his book, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea*, James Bos argues that we have to read Hosea as a production of the Persian period.<sup>91</sup> He ignores any historical argument for the monarchic period and argues that under the circumstance of little literacy for Israelite men, the production of any anti-

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<sup>89</sup> Wöhrle, *Die frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches*, 54–58.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 462; Jakob Wöhrle, "'No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones': The Exilic Book of the Four Prophets (Hos., Am., Mic., Zeph.) as a Concept Opposed to the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 58, no. 4–5 (2008): 623–626.

<sup>91</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea*.

monarchical text was barely plausible.<sup>92</sup> He claims that because the Israelite administration controlled reading and writing, therefore no northern king would ever have let Hosea write such a negative view of the institution of kingship. In other words, no Israelite king would have tolerated this kind of rebellion and, therefore, the book of Hosea could have not been written in the monarchic period and it must have been written in the early Persian period when Bos posits a proper time period for the setting of composition of the book. Bos believes that the polemics against Benjamin and Bethel are also well supported in the early Persian period.<sup>93</sup> In the same vein, Ben Zvi argues that many points support a post-monarchic setting for the present book of Hosea. He views that exile is a central motif and even the text points to the return from exile in Hos 2. He further connects this theme of return from exile with a central motif of Persian Yehud where “return from exile and the glorious future are ideologically associated with the reunification of Israel and Judah.”<sup>94</sup>

According to Bos’s view of the anti-monarchical text, do all negative nuances and statements toward kingship in the Hebrew Bible have to be products of the Persian period? In my opinion, these scholars overlook that the Pentateuchal references to Jacob going to Aram for a wife, for the prophet who led Israelites up from Egypt, for the setting of territorial boundaries with Laban are all relevant for understanding that there were some

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 35–39.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 164–165.

<sup>94</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 15.

forms of Pentateuchal narratives already in the monarchic period, which is probably E material.<sup>95</sup>

Most scholars, such as John Bright,<sup>96</sup> partly ignore the vassal relationship with Assyria during the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE because the Books of Kings do not contain any text that indicates Israel's alliance with Assyria during this period until Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE).<sup>97</sup> However, I argue that Israel was heavily involved with Assyria from Shalmaneser III (859-824 BCE) through Tiglath-Pileser III. The Assyrian agenda was to try to gain control of the trade route of western Asia. Bright looks at Tiglath-Pileser III as the Assyrian monarch, who first tried to invade Israel. However, Shalmaneser III's report which indicates his attack against Aram that King Ahab tried to stop, as well as Adad Nirari V's tribute list, propose the relationship before Tiglath-Pileser III. In particular, Bright believes that Tiglath-Pileser III was the one who started wars. However, Bright does not ask why and what changed in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser that caused these patterns of war despite the fact that before his reign, over one hundred years, there were wars to take control of western Asia.

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<sup>95</sup> The Wellhausen Documentary hypothesis proposes that the Pentateuch was the product of the successive conflation of four sources: Yahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D), and Priestly source (P). Wellhausen argues that J was written about 950 BCE and E was written about 850 BCE. However, recent scholars argue that E is the earliest source. Cf. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, eds., *Farewell to the Yahwist?: The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006); Marvin A. Sweeney, *Tanakh: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

<sup>96</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. 2 Kings 15:19–20. This text reports the first contact with Assyria occurred when Assyria (Tiglath-Pileser III) invaded Israel and took a thousand talents of silver from Menahem (745-738 BCE), King of Israel, son of Shallum.

#### 2.1.5. Summary

As the brief history of scholarship illustrates, the topics have yielded abundant scholarly scrutiny which creates a great variety of methods for handling the issues. In my opinion, the key observation, that has consistently eluded scholarly endeavors to untangle the questions and issues of this text, is the recognition that Hosea presents the political dimension for the future of Israel. At the SBL conference, I enumerated all the best ways that Hosea attempted to persuade the leadership who controlled the nation into the fall ignoring the right way to follow YHWH, as well as the people who had to experience all disaster without knowing anything.<sup>98</sup> In other words, the book of Hosea was written to advocate Hosea's political viewpoint. Nevertheless, given its spatial limitation, that presentation only had the capacity to broadly lay out some of the conceptual framework pertaining to this argument.

I believe that only after one acknowledges the political dimension of Hosea's prophetic activity can one begin to effectively illustrate how the questions in the previous scholarly research will be answered. The intent of this study is to offer a much more extensive analysis of the argument, both synchronically and diachronically: synchronically, this study offers detailed form-critical analyses of the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations; diachronically, this study attempts to identify the historical setting that explained the literary content of the book of Hosea.

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<sup>98</sup> Kyung Sik Park, "Assyria Cannot Save Us: Socio-Political Reading of Hosea's Metaphors and Proclamation" (presentation, The Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, GA, November 22, 2015).



## 2.2. Methodology: Form Criticism

### 2.2.1. Definition of Form Criticism

Form-critical method is a linguistic textual analysis in both synchronic and diachronic approaches to texts focusing especially on the patterns of language in texts and on the role that these patterns play in giving shape and expression to the text.<sup>99</sup> Form-critical method was developed along with the idea that there is a fundamental disagreement between historical and literary methods of biblical criticism. In their book, *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, Steven McKenzie and Stephen Haynes well explain about the disagreement, saying that:

historical methods...emphasize the historical, archaeological, or literary backgrounds or roots of a text, and the development of the text through time...literary methods tend to focus on the text itself in its final form..., the

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<sup>99</sup> For the discussion of biblical form-critical methodology, see John H. Hayes, *Old Testament Form Criticism* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974); Mignon Jacobs, *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007); Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition* (New York, NY: Charles Scribners, 1969); Klaus Koch, *Was Ist Formgeschichte? Neue Weg Der Bibelexegese, 3. Auflage Mit Einem Nachwort* (Neukirchen-Vlyun: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974); Odil H. Steck, *Exegese Des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989); Ellen Van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009); Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi, *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003); Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

relationships between a variety of textual elements...,the relationships between a variety of textual elements..., and the interaction between texts and readers.<sup>100</sup>

They point the disagreement of viewpoint because the focus of the critics in both methods is remarkably different. Previously, scholars who focus on diachronic approach to the text disregard the present form of the text. They only emphasize the historical features in the text and ignore the literary setting and intention of the text. Furthermore, they disregard the form of the text which is an expression of the author or redactor's own concepts and intentions in order to deliver their own ideas and messages. Thus, the form is crucial part in the interpretation of the text. In his famous and revolutionary article, "Form Criticism and Beyond," presented as presidential address of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968, James Muilenburg asserts that,

A responsible and proper articulation of the words in their linguistic patterns and in their precise formulations will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer's thought, not only what it is that he thinks, but as he thinks it.<sup>101</sup>

In making this comment, Muilenburg urges us to consider texts' form and content together in order to bear finest interpretation of the text. In contrast, the other scholars who only focus on the synchronic feature of the text also yield a problematic interpretation of the text, overemphasizing the intention or message of the final form of the text within the literary setting. Such literary setting results the corruption of the

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<sup>100</sup> McKenzie and Haynes, *To Each Its Own Meaning*, 7. They categorize biblical methods as follows: lists of historical methods are source criticism, form criticism, tradition-historical criticism, and redaction criticism; lists of literary methods are structural criticism, narrative criticism, reader-response criticism, and poststructuralist criticism.

<sup>101</sup> James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88, no. 1 (1969): 7.

overarching connection in the text because it ignores the historical or social setting of the text.

Therefore, both synchronic and diachronic approaches to the text have to communicate each other for the best exegesis of the text. As I stated first, current form-critical method utilizes synchronic and diachronic approaches and is very different from the way former form critics use. In his article, “Form Criticism,” Sweeney looks at the final and edited forms of the current biblical books and argues that form criticism provides “the basis for both the synchronic and the diachronic interpretation of biblical literature.”<sup>102</sup> Sweeney himself writes that;

the form critic must be prepared to consider multiple forms, genres, settings, and intentions in the interpretation of the biblical text throughout its literary history. This has tremendous implications for the concept of setting in form-critical scholarship, because it requires the consideration of various types of settings—sociological, historical, and literary—as well as multiple expressions of each. Although a text may be composed in relation to a specific context and set of concerns, it will be read in relation to later literary, historical, and social settings, according to the presuppositions and concerns that are operative in those later contexts.<sup>103</sup>

Basically, Sweeney is saying that with these synchronic and diachronic considerations, scholars can responsibly begin the process of trying to interpret and explain the characters of the text. I wholeheartedly endorse what Sweeney calls for the requirement

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<sup>102</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, “Form Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 58–89.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 68.

of biblical exegesis. Form criticism is not only a unique method to address both synchronic and diachronic issues, but also a fundamental method to serve and interact with other critical methodologies for interpretation of the biblical text.

Having just argued that form-critical method addresses both synchronic and diachronic issues and interacts with other critical methodological approaches, let us now turn our attention to the history of the form criticism in order to see how the form criticism develops in the course of history.

#### 2.2.2. History of Form Criticism

Form-critical exegesis was developed by some classical form critical scholars such as Hermann Gunkel, Sigmund Mowinckel, Gerhard von Rad, Martin Noth, Claus Westermann, and Rolf Knierim. Beginning with Rolf Knierim from 1970, form criticism began to change markedly with very different kinds of conceptualization method to literary characteristic by literary scholars such as Meir Sternberg, Harald Schweizer, Phyllis Trible, Arie van der Kooij, Carol Newsom, and David Carr. The intellectual and theological concerns of these individual form critics evolve the understanding and articulation of form criticism. The interrelationship between form-critical work and that of other critical methodologies, such as tradition-criticism, redaction-criticism, linguistics, narrative analysis, rhetorical criticism, folklore studies, and textual-criticism is very important to proper exegesis. I will discuss these scholars, focusing on their approaches to texts in relation to the question how their critical methods influence the development of form-critical exegesis.

#### 2.2.2.1. Source Criticism as a starting point

Source critics assume that the biblical texts that we possess were not the creations of their writers, but were in originally circulation in some oral form in the communities where they arose. The goal of the source critic, therefore, is to go behind the text in search of the oral sources that were used in the formation of these biblical narratives. Source critics would argue that writers often exhibit some consistency in the way they write in terms of style, the terminologies they use, and the perspectives they present of their work. In a given work, therefore, any diversion may signal an incorporation of different sources.

In “Source Criticism,” Pauline Viviano summarizes the history of source criticism.<sup>104</sup> She explains that source criticism in the Old Testament has received its fullest employment in Pentateuchal studies. First, assuming Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Jean Astruc, a French physician, set out to find out the sources that Moses used.<sup>105</sup> His focus on Genesis’ terminology for God led him to conclude that there are

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<sup>104</sup> Pauline Viviano, “Source Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 37–42. For discussion of the history, description, and application of source criticism in detail, see Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena Zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1886); Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1965); Ronald E. Clements, *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976); Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1981); John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

<sup>105</sup> Viviano, “Source Criticism,” 37–38.

two sources in the text. The first source uses the name *Elohim*, and the second source uses the name *Yahweh*. Second, Astruc's study was carried forward by J. G. Eichhorn who established a "documentary hypothesis."<sup>106</sup> Eichhorn argued that the biblical texts have drawn on various documents to reach their final forms. Third, A. Geddes proposed the "fragmentary hypothesis," which focused on various law codes and argued that fragments rather than sources lay behind the formation of the Pentateuch. Fourth, H. Ewald's "Supplementary Hypothesis" argued that the Pentateuch exhibited too much unity to have been just a parchment of fragments.<sup>107</sup> Ewald, then, argued that the core material for the formation of the Pentateuch was done by the *Elohist* compiler. This compiler then supplemented his/her work from other sources. Fifth, beginning with H. Hupfeld, scholars discovered that the *Elohist* source was actually two sources in one. One was termed early and the other late in terms of dating. Both of these sources used the name *Elohim* for God. Hupfeld called the later source "E" and the early one he called "P." Sixth, following the above, W. M. L. de Wette argued that the materials that compose the book of Deuteronomy were different from the material in J, E, P. He termed the new source "D." Lastly, it was the work of Julius Wellhausen that synthesized the above accounts into a formative statement that controlled biblical scholarship for generations.<sup>108</sup> Wellhausen argued that the Pentateuch was not written by a single author. Rather, Wellhausen maintained that four sources were used to compose the final form of the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 40–42.

Pentateuch.<sup>109</sup> These Sources are: J, the Yahwist, is the oldest source developed around 950 BCE; E, the Elohist, originated in the northern kingdom around 850 BCE; D, the Deuteronomic writing, is based on Deuteronomy dated around 621 BCE, when it was discovered in the Josianic temple; and P, the Priestly source, is based on priestly matters and emerged in the priestly circles during the exile around 550 BCE.<sup>110</sup>

#### 2.2.2.2. Hermann Gunkel, 1901

The origins of modern form-critical research appear in the writings of Hermann Gunkel, especially in his book: *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History*.<sup>111</sup> When Gunkel worked in the field, the source critical analysis of Julius Wellhausen was dominant. While Gunkel moved beyond Wellhausen, he did not question the existence of biblical sources but his interest lay rather in their prehistory, rooted in the non-literary culture of Israel before the rise of the monarchy. Gunkel believed that these narratives reached their present form by a process of oral composition and oral transmission. He argued that a sufficient analysis of the short, self-contained literary units is the basis for reconstructing the original speech-form employed in the various settings in ancient Israel.

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<sup>109</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition Des Hexateuchs Und Der Historischen Bücher Des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1899); Wellhausen, *Prolegomena Zur Geschichte Israels*.

<sup>110</sup> Viviano, "Source Criticism," 40–41.

<sup>111</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History*, trans. W. H. Carruth (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1901); Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997).

Holding on the idea that primitive communities were simple-minded and could not memorize longer texts, Gunkel focused his research on the short self-contained literary units (first, in Genesis, then, Psalms) with the hope that they would lead him to recover the oral forms.<sup>112</sup> For Gunkel, the Psalms that begin with “we” in their address and prayer to God, must have been developed in the context of public worship and particularly in times of national crisis when Israel came together to implore God’s intervention.<sup>113</sup> For example, Gunkel looked at the mythological motifs in the texts and asked where these mythological motifs originated. Gunkel worked in the 19<sup>th</sup> century BCE when the major Babylonian and some of Egyptian mythological texts had been discovered. These included: 1) Enuma Elish, which is Babylonian creation epic; 2) Gilgamesh, which includes not only hero stories about Gilgamesh but also one of the major Mesopotamian version of the flood; and 3) another flood story about Atrahasis. These stories gave a new context to the biblical story.

With the publication of these kinds of mythologies and very clear parallels with the literary creation accounts in Genesis, Gunkel argued that there is clear influence from earlier orally transmitted mythological traditions from Babylonia. In other words, Gunkel tried to get to the origins of the biblical literature, looking at comparative mythology and folklore to try to reconstruct what kind of oral tradition stood behind that text in Genesis. He argued in the introduction of the book, *Genesis*, that folklore is a type of oral literature. Gunkel believed that motif or story is passed on in a living oral tradition, and every time

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<sup>112</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, HKAT 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926).

<sup>113</sup> Barton, *Reading the Old Testament*, 35.



it is told, it might change its form.<sup>114</sup> But once it is written down, a text is concretized and does not change anymore. Therefore, there were different versions of the mythological works.

Gunkel developed his analysis over Wellhausenian source analysis looking at the pre-literary stages (legends) of the biblical materials and argues that the narratives of Genesis were originally an independent individual legend in oral form, influenced by the material of the Ancient Near East.<sup>115</sup> Gunkel believed that form criticism does not analyze a final form of the text, but oral traditions behind text. However, there are some problems to Gunkel's approach: 1) he does not answer the question of how to determine the oral basis of a literary work; 2) he ignored the inter-connected link between the texts; and 3) he did not consider the syntactical analysis in detail.

#### 2.2.2.3. Sigmund Mowinckel, 1921

Sigmund Mowinckel was one of Gunkel's students. In his book, *Psalmestudien*, Mowinckel argued that Israelite eschatology was ultimately derived from an Israelite New Year or divine enthronement Festival.<sup>116</sup> Basically, Gunkel was interested in tracing the intellectual and literary links between Babylonian mythology and Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Mowinckel had the same interest and searched psalms for liturgical

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<sup>114</sup> Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 3–12.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>116</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmestudien* (Kristiania: J. Dybwad, 1921). Translated in English, see Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalms Studies*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

literature. Mowinckel was interested in the source of the content of the most important ideas and concepts of eschatology.<sup>117</sup> The study of Enuma Elish raised the question of social background or setting of the Babylonian creation epic, and he determined that the *Sitz im Leben* of Psalms was the Temple.<sup>118</sup> Mowinckel insisted that the *Sitz im Leben* of Enuma Elish was its performance at the Akitu festival (Babylonian new year festival). He states that “eschatology arose from the enthronement festival.”<sup>119</sup> Mowinckel noted that the literature that speaks of the kingship of God is found in the Psalms and it derives from Enuma Elish, where the celebration of Akitu festival includes a procession to honor and praise Marduk.<sup>120</sup> Mowinckel looked at this festival as a renewal of kingship, while the Psalms emphasizes a different kingship of God, through praise, lament, and song of ascent.

He argues that Israelite eschatology ultimately comes from the manifestation of the divine to control chaos in the world. This is imported into Israel (Judah) and becomes the basis for a New Year’s Festival in Jerusalem in which the kingship of God is celebrated. The psalms include the notion of Adonai Ha-Malakh and Rosh Hashana that

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<sup>117</sup> Mowinckel, *Psalm Studies*, 400–401.

<sup>118</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas, vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 85–103. For the original book in Norwegian, see Sigmund Mowinckel, *Offersang Og Sangoffer. Salmediktningen I Bibelen* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1951).

<sup>119</sup> Mowinckel, *Psalm Studies*, 481.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 216–222.

represents God's manifestation as king.<sup>121</sup> For Mowinckel, that motif explains the emergence of eschatological thought in Israel.

As Mowinckel believed that the psalms were used in the worship service before pre-exilic period, his reconstruction posits the traditions behind the text.<sup>122</sup> Mowinckel was very interested in psychological aspects of the Psalms. He connects Psalms with Israel's New Year festival, emphasizing that the Psalms were gathered and constructed for the needs of the cult. As Gene Tucker mentions, Mowinckel developed "Gunkel's research in the direction of a 'cult functional' evaluation in which each and every psalm was placed in a formal religious ceremony."<sup>123</sup> Mowinckel's notion became an issue later in prophetic literature because he stressed the institutional settings in which Israelite literature developed.<sup>124</sup> Mowinckel's study shows the various genres of Psalms and his study later develops various genres in the narratives. However, Mowinckel could not explain precisely how cult can generate narratives. Moreover, there are psalms that are related to individual complaints, such as Psalms 3, 4, 5, and 7. Therefore, such various cultural and historical settings of Psalms remain questions with Mowinckel's study.

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 260–268.

<sup>122</sup> Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2:15–22.

<sup>123</sup> Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971), 81.

<sup>124</sup> Sweeney, "Form Criticism," 62.

#### 2.2.2.4. Gerhard Von Rad, 1938

Gunkel's emphasis on oral tradition is reflected in the work of Gerhard von Rad. In his book, *The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch*, Von Rad concentrated on the final form of the Hexateuch and argued that the final form is a massively expanded version of an originally simple creedal statement.<sup>125</sup> He found that the creedal formulae, such as Deut 6:20–24; 26:5–9; and Josh 24:2–13, are brief summaries of how Israel expressed their faith in YHWH, especially in Deut 26:5–9.<sup>126</sup> He argued that these creedal statements were later collected and developed into the Hexateuch narrative.<sup>127</sup> He further pointed out that these creedal statements do not include the giving of the law at Sinai. Thus, he supposed that Sinai is an entirely different tradition.<sup>128</sup> This led him to conclude that the exodus-occupation tradition originated in the festival of Shavuot at Gilgal, while the Sinai tradition came from the festival of Sukkot at Shechem.<sup>129</sup> Von Rad directly disagreed with Gunkel's understanding of the history of traditions and asserted that the J writer (the Yahwist) assembled the various elements of this material, including the Sinai tradition and the creation stories, and shaped it into a coherent narrative, forming the present literary scope of the Hexateuch. His recognition of the J writer as an author, a historian, and, at the same time, a theologian served an outstanding study. He maintained

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<sup>125</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966). This includes a translation from Gerhard Von Rad, *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem Des Hexateuch*, BWANT 4 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938).

<sup>126</sup> Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, 1–8.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–50.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–54.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–20.

that the Israelites recited the narrative in the context of the cultic observance of the annual festival in order to unify various tribes as well as to establish their identity in a single history of Israel.<sup>130</sup>

Von Rad attempts to resolve previous problems of Wellhausen and Gunkel and provided how a short genre could be expanded and that textual interpretation has to deal with the various compositional levels.<sup>131</sup> His study became a foundation of tradition-historical criticism by the way he proposes how both oral and written continuities influence the construction of the traditions that finally culminated in the Hebrew Bible. One of the weaknesses of Von Rad's study is that most scholars now agree that the wandering Aramean in Deut 26:5–9 suggests a Deuteronomistic composition rather than an ancient liturgical formulation in an older historical tradition. Von Rad believed that these verses are recitations of thanksgiving of the divine redemption.<sup>132</sup> In addition, the origins of the Sinai tradition or the agricultural festival remain questions to be answered.

#### 2.2.2.5. Martin Noth, 1943

In his book, *The Deuteronomistic History*, Martin Noth argued that the material in Deuteronomy and Joshua-Kings is a unified history of Israel written by a single, exilic author, whom is named as the Deuteronomist (Dtr) and whose work is “the

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 50–78.

<sup>131</sup> Sweeney, “Form Criticism,” 64.

<sup>132</sup> Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, 2.

Deuteronomistic History” (DtrH).<sup>133</sup> Noth rejected the hypothesis that each of the books from Joshua to Kings originated as individual units and that they were brought to their present state by multiple Deuteronomic redactions. Rather, Noth was interested in studying the overall process of the growth of traditions from oral stage to the larger literary blocks.

Noth argued that Dtr selected the traditions, which are appropriate for Dtr’s purpose and unified them based on common structure and chronology.<sup>134</sup> There are various short and summary histories throughout the books to speak about the theological outlook of this work. These summary histories try to explain the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent Israelite exile. For example, Joshua’s speeches in Josh 1 and 23 indicate the initiation and conclusion of the conquest and settlement of Canaan. In the narrative of 1 Sam 12, Samuel’s speech marks the transition between the period of the judges and the monarchy period. While in 1 Kgs 8, Solomon’s speech highlights the dedication of the temple. Noth also pointed out that Josh 12 and 2 Kgs 17 work as a final review of Dtr.

The compiler brought together these independent units to try to explain the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent Israelite exile. In other words, the destruction of the Temple and the fall and exile of the last king of Judah marked the end of Israel’s history. The catastrophic events in Israel were as a result of Israel’s failure to

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<sup>133</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, trans. Jane Doull, JSOTSup 15 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981). This translated book was published in German, see Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden Und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke Im Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1943).

<sup>134</sup> Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 77–78.

obey the covenant as expressed in the book of Deuteronomy. This is a judgment against the whole nation because of their continual apostasy against YHWH with no hope in the future. This is how the Dtr author regards the past and present situation of Israel.

In terms of a theological explanation, Dtr's historical narrative argues for divine retribution upon the people, in the form of annihilation of the nation, as a result of the people's (and the monarchy's) failure to heed repeated divine warnings and punishments for their apostasy from the period of the occupation of the land, continuing through to the final fall of Jerusalem. Noth suggests that the Dtr held that the special relationship between God and his people was defined by "covenant" and "law" and God's divine intervention in history. The law was necessary not to prescribe a particular form of worship, but to prohibit forms of worship which were wrong.<sup>135</sup> The Dtr adopts a fairly negative view of cultic practices, and a lack of interest in a singular place of worship, in order to prevent illegitimate worship. In addition, there is a negative view of the monarchy. In Noth's word, Dtr "saw the divine judgment which was acted out in his account of the external collapse of Israel as a nation as something final and definitive and he expressed no hope for the future."<sup>136</sup>

Later Noth's argument was developed by two main schools of thought: the Havard School and the Göttingen School. The Havard School hypothesis, initiated by Frank Cross, proposed a pre- and a postexilic redaction of the Deuteronomistic History

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 97.

(Dtr<sub>1</sub>, Dtr<sub>2</sub>).<sup>137</sup> The Göttingen School hypothesis, initiated by Rudolf Smend, proposed three postexilic redactions (DtrG, DtrH, and DtrN).<sup>138</sup> The Smend model has some problems as it is based on a Wellhausenian understanding of law since it identifies references to the Pentateuch in texts as later additions. Smend's model also has a strict form-critical exegetical basis that limits interconnectivity within genres. Therefore, the Cross model is far more promising. An important consequence of Cross's work entails his reevaluation of the assumed primacy of the Pentateuch. He begins with a challenge to the concept of a Hexateuch and develops it into an assertion that the links between the end of the Sinai/occupation traditions and the story of settlement life were forged through later literary development.<sup>139</sup> Although Noth's work has been subsequently challenged and nuanced, his identification of the Deuteronomistic History revolutionized biblical scholarship.

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<sup>137</sup> Frank Cross modified Noth's argument and suggested that there are two different editions. See Frank Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 285–287. Some famous followers of the Cross model are Richard Nelson and Richard Friedman. For the detailed study of these scholars, see Richard Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup 18 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981); Richard Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works*, HSM 22 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>138</sup> Rudolf Smend attempted to analyze Dtr layer by layer. For the detailed study of this model, see Rudolf Smend, "Das Gesetz Und Die Völker: Ein Beitrag Zur Deuteronomistische Redaktionsgeschichte," in *Probleme Biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad Zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans W. Wolff (Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 495–509. Smend's work was developed by his students. See Walter Dietrich, *Prophezie Und Geschichte: Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung Zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk*, FRLANT 108 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); Timo Veijola, *Die Ewige Dynastie: David Und Die Entstehung Seiner Dynastie Nach Der Deuteronomistischen Darstellung*, AASF B/193 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1975).

<sup>139</sup> Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 76.



#### 2.2.2.6. Claus Westermann, 1960

In his book, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, Claus Westermann focused on the origin of the speeches and their forms in Israelite life and institutions. He proposed basic forms of prophetic speech, and pointed out that the messenger formula (e.g., thus says the lord) is very important, and the judgment speeches are the most prominent form of prophetic address.<sup>140</sup> Westermann believed that these basic forms are authentic. Unlike Gunkel who thought that the prophets have employed various forms for their messages, Westermann argued that the judgment speech form is the only authentic and original one and it constantly appears throughout the text. He states:

...exhortation and warning, where they are encountered, cannot have the same function as the reason in the announcement of judgment...One may conclude then that the exhortation and warning are not independent prophetic speech genres, but represent expansions of the original prophetic speech forms.<sup>141</sup>

In other words, some forms, such as exhortation and warning, are unlike the basic forms of prophetic speech. He demonstrated that there were the structural parallel forms between the messenger speeches in the Hebrew Bible and those in the Mari texts and asserted that “the character of the prophetic speeches as messenger’s speeches is fully confirmed.”<sup>142</sup> Westermann believed that the prophetic speeches of the Hebrew Bible

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<sup>140</sup> Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, trans. Hugh C. White (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1967). For the original book, see Claus Westermann, *Grundformen Prophetischer Rede* (Muenchen: Kaiser, 1960).

<sup>141</sup> Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 98.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 128.

provide “an earlier history” which is “the time before written prophecy.”<sup>143</sup> In addition, he proposed that prophetic judgment speeches contain two different types: the prophetic judgment speech to the individual (JI) and the announcement of judgment against Israel (JN). He argued that the prophetic judgment speech against Israel was developed from the announcement of judgment against the individual.<sup>144</sup> For him, the structure of the prophetic judgment speech against the individual includes the commissioning of a messenger, the accusation, the announcement, and judgment speeches without a reason. However, the announcement of judgment against Israel contains more developed forms, including the reasons of “transgression at the outset in a general conceptual form.”<sup>145</sup>

Westermann suggested that the prophetic books contained a tripartite structure of prophetic speech as the basic elements of the tradition: 1) accounts, by which he means historical narratives; 2) prophetic speeches, in the form of lament; and 3) utterance/prayers, which is the basic form of the Psalter.<sup>146</sup> For him, this structure is critical for readers because it enables one to see the transmission from their pre-literary to literary stage. Prophetic speeches are derived from this tripartite structure. Prior to its written form, prophetic words were transmitted only in the body of the account. Westermann argued that by the eighth century BCE, prophetic speeches became so intensely historical that they are collected and formed the matrix of the prophetic books. During the exile, these prophetic speeches were mixed with priestly speeches, causing

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 90–91.

various speech-forms. Therefore, one must set aside the accounts and utterances and focus on the prophetic speech or the words of the prophets. Westermann believed that the form is typical and emphasized the identification of these typical forms of prophetic speech in order to explore the social roles of the prophets in Israelite society.<sup>147</sup>

Westermann concluded that the announcement of judgment is the basic form of prophetic speeches and the announcement is introduced by the messenger formula, which Westermann believed was the same form of the messenger speech in the Ancient Near East. Even though there are other scholars, such as Kneirim, who argue that there is a unique character in the text whom we have not yet engaged, this typicality is not enough to explain the basic forms.

#### 2.2.2.7. Rolf Knierim, 1973

In his book, *Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered*, Knierim explores the fluidity of genre and shows how genre is not absolute.<sup>148</sup> Previously, Gunkel thought that genre is an ideal and a coherent entity of form and setting. However, Knierim believes that there are problems in the criteria for identifying genre as well as the relationship between genre and setting.<sup>149</sup> He states “one of the facts is that we are no longer so clear as to what exactly a genre is. More pointedly, it is doubtful whether this has ever been

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<sup>147</sup> Sweeney and Ben Zvi, *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Rolf Knierim, “Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered,” *Int* 27 (1973): 435–67.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 436–437.

clear.”<sup>150</sup> Knierim realizes that generalizing the concept is very difficult as our understanding of genre is keep changing.<sup>151</sup> Knierim argues that there are typical elements but sometimes they show something unique. The components, which comprise a text’s typicality, are not always unified in the same way.<sup>152</sup> All multiple components of genre, setting, intention, structure, content, and mood are in play in the text interrelationally. Therefore, Knierim argues that “it is important to conceptualize methodology less ideologically. It would seem to proper to set up the framework within which this specific form of critical tools can be applied flexibly.”<sup>153</sup> This approach bears on the well-known *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature* (FOTL) series which has a fourfold agenda including: the study of structure, genre, setting, and intention. In this series, editors seek four features in modern form criticism. The ambiguous word “form,” with a change to two distinct terms: structure and genre. The investigation covers all stages of a text but most especially the genre. The relationship between genre and setting is expanded and complicated and the revised method seeks to establish standard nomenclature.

Knierim disagrees with the practice that the biblical literature should be identified first on the basis of a supposed oral tradition. Rather, Knierim argues that:

Form-critical methodology must take the literary character of our texts seriously. The literary versions are the only ones we possess. If these texts, or some of them,

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 436.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 458.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 454–455.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 459.

rest on oral traditions, then this fact must be specifically demonstrated.

Furthermore, the relationship or distinctly different typicalities between written and oral versions must be explained.<sup>154</sup>

In other words, Knierim insists that the synchronic literary structure of the text must be analyzed first in its full form in order to identify the underlying conceptions and presuppositions or assumptions that both generate the text and are expressed in it.<sup>155</sup>

Furthermore, he mentioned that “the synchronic structure of language is always related to a certain state of prelinguistic conceptualization.”<sup>156</sup> For him, the larger structure of the text then enables the exegete to come to decisions concerning the place of smaller units within the whole. He stated that “in contrast to most traditional form-critical work, the interpretation of the texts accepts the fundamental premise that we possess all texts basically at their latest written stages.”<sup>157</sup>

Previously, scholars paid attention to find what the original form is. However, Knierim argued that dealing with the final form is important because all translation work is a literary work of its own (Septuagint, Vulgate, Peshitta, etc.). He proposed that redaction criticism is the first step to understand and also to engage the final form of the

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 457–458.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 461.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 440–441.

<sup>157</sup> Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*, ed. Rolf Knierim and Gene M. Tucker, FOTL 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), x. Antony Campbell quotes Knierim and Tucker’s “Editor’s Foreword” and believes that a new phase of form criticism began with the first book of the FOTL series. Campbell also emphasizes that biblical interpretation has to begin from larger units to the smaller constitutive units and argues that form criticism is “an essential element in the art of interpretation.” Ibid., 26.

text, and to understand theological intent from the hand of redactor. Redactors are not just mechanics, they are interpreters and theologians: they are the ones who actually shaped the final form of the bible. In sum, Knierim stated that “we are no longer stuck with the expectation of a distinct typicality in a text when such a typicality may never have been constitutive for its existence.”<sup>158</sup> In other words, he observed that a text is governed by various factors beyond what the traditional form criticism asked for. Kneirim’s work opens biblical scholars to reception criticism with the question, how the ancient redactor read the bible? How do these redactors read the text in their setting? These are the key questions to understand the final form of the text.

#### 2.2.2.8. Meir Sternberg, 1985

In his book, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, Meir Sternberg presents a full and sensitive analysis of many crucial narrative episodes in the Bible.<sup>159</sup> He uses the term ‘poetics’ carefully because it requires a systematic study of the biblical narratives primarily as literature. This approach takes the literary art and aesthetic dimensions of the text seriously. But, Sternberg goes far beyond a superficial analysis of rhetorical devices and structural elements that so often have passed as ‘literary criticism’ of the Bible. For him, narrative is marked by a functional structure of communication between narrator

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<sup>158</sup> Knierim, “Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered,” 468.

<sup>159</sup> Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

and audience in which an author chooses strategies to produce the desired effects on the reader.<sup>160</sup>

Sternberg proposes that there are three important functional principles that are used for the narrator to communicate with and deliver to the reader the intention of the narrative. The first, the ideological function, “leaps to the eye in the segments of law interspersed ” throughout the narratives, prophetic announcements, or stories in thematic structures like sin and retribution.<sup>161</sup> Secondly, the historiographic function appears in the dating, names, places, genealogies, or patterns like chronology. These serve as indications of larger configurations. Lastly, the aesthetic principle “bears the marks of invention and fulfills the roles of imaginative enhancement and probing of reality associated with it.”<sup>162</sup> Symmetry, repetition, wordplay, verbal chains, and shifts in perspective (from prose to verse) are all literary working devices in the aesthetic principle.<sup>163</sup> Sternberg further emphasizes that:

my argument—that the Bible exhibits the operation of a strong aesthetic (artistic, literary, poetic) principle—even stops short of what this convergence of views might warrant. It is on the pervasiveness rather than on the occurrence of the principle that my claim of the Bible’s literariness rests, and with it my case for poetics.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 441–481.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 43.

In addition, Sternberg points out the literary skills that are used for communication between narrators and readers. For example, gaps, ambiguity, irony, truth, discontinuity, repetition, and meaning. These literary devices expressed by narrators enhance the reader's interest and allow them to fill in the gaps of the narrative themselves.

Sternberg's original interest in how a narrative acts appears in his study of the narrative forces that are constant to every narrative, such as suspense, curiosity, and surprise. These are driven by variables such as gaps, exterior/interior representation, and redundancy.

Sternberg argues that each text is uniquely formulated as a distinct literary composition with its own structure, characteristics, and aims. The focus on larger textual units demonstrates the basic interrelationship between typical elements of genre and the unique formulation of individual texts. While genres can determine the overall form of a distinct text, they do not necessarily do so. Typical generic elements frequently function within a text and play a role in its composition or formulation, but they do not necessarily dictate its composition or formulation. Instead, the author's intentions dictate the composition and formulation of a text. Genres do not always define texts but they function within them as compositional tools.



#### 2.2.2.9. Harald Schweizer, 1981

In his book, *Metaphorische Grammatik*, Harald Schweizer attempts to apply modern linguistic theory to the study of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>165</sup> Previously, earlier form critics studied motif subjectively as they dealt with the structure in oral speech patterns. Basically, every language system has a structure for organization (syntax) as well as a symbolic meaning (semantic). Schweizer argues that the linguistic character of a text establishes or determines what the form of text might be. Knowing its organization and how it presents its idea is crucial to textual interpretation.<sup>166</sup> In particular, Schweizer proposes that the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible has to be focusing on the intention of the text based on the linguistic mode of expression found or formed in the text.<sup>167</sup> In other words, he attempts to lay out text critical theory and he applies it to interpretation of the biblical text.

Schweizer claims that form and content must be considered together because the two develop their own order. Thus, it is important to consider semantic factors with syntactic factors in determining the intent of a text. His method is to figure out and define the decisive communication unit and then to analyze the linguistic signs including syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. First of all, he wants to examine syntax, which deals with the formal rules of language, such as ordering and arrangement of linguistic elements. Next, he looks at semantics, which deals with the relations of contents conveyed in the

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<sup>165</sup> Harald Schweizer, *Metaphorische Grammatik: Wage Zur Integration von Grammatik Und Textinterpretation in Der Exegeses*, ATSAT 15 (St. Ottilien: EOS, 1981).

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 3–16.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

linguistic expressions, such as illocution, predication, and imagination, etc. Lastly, he examines pragmatics, which shows the intent of the “sender” as well as the probable effect on the “receiver,” based on the systematic relationships between linguistic expressions, their meanings, and the appropriate settings in communication. In other words, Schweizer emphasizes the three elements—form, function, setting—of textual interpretation.

Schweizer continues to explain these three linguistic signs in detail in the book. He points to language as a closed system with its own rules and syntax and function of elements within that language. The goal of exegesis is to determine the intention or viewpoint of the biblical text based upon the linguistic modes of expression found within that shaped text. His understanding of the role, content and form to determine the structure of a text is very useful. Sweeney indicates that Schweizer attempted to answer the old form critical problem of “how one discovers the factors which generate a text when one has only the text itself to work with.” According to Sweeney, Schweizer provided very sophisticated and useful means for approaching the problem.

#### 2.2.2.10. Phyllis Tribble, 1994 and James Muilenburg, 1969

In her book, *Rhetorical Criticism*, Phyllis Tribble focuses mainly on rhetorical elements in the texts.<sup>168</sup> She argues that the organic unity of form and content give

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<sup>168</sup> Phyllis Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994).

rhetorical criticism its distinct character.<sup>169</sup> Tribble's understanding of form criticism lies within the historical context of its development, and she was influenced by her teacher, James Muilenburg. He delivered a presidential address at the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968 entitled "Form Criticism and Beyond."<sup>170</sup> This was the first time that the Society paid attention to rhetorical criticism, and the outcome of this "beyond" has been fruitful in that it has "become a full-fledged discipline evoking a rich heritage and enjoying a vital presence."<sup>171</sup>

Tribble examines historical literary background that forms the foundation of rhetorical criticism and points out that the four components which make up the background of the discipline are crucially important. They are classical rhetoric, literary critical theory, literary study of the Bible, and form criticism. First, Tribble asserts that the beginning of rhetorical criticism lies with classical rhetoric.<sup>172</sup> She argues that rhetoric means not only discovering the means of persuasion, but also the art of speech and composition based on communication.<sup>173</sup> Second, Tribble argues that biblical scholars unconsciously have used secular literary theory, such as mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective. Third, Tribble presents a list of scholars (such as Philo (20 BCE-50 ADE),

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>170</sup> Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond."

<sup>171</sup> Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 5.

<sup>172</sup> This concept emerged in the fourth or fifth century BCE (from the Sophists, Isocrates, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, etc.).

<sup>173</sup> Tribble discusses five parts of classical rhetoric: invention (*inventio*), structure (*dispositio*), style (*elocutio*), memory (*memoria*), and delivery (*pronunciation/actio*). For more detailed study, see Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 5–9.

Josephus (37-100), Cassiodorus (487-580), Petrarch (1304-1374), Erasmus (1466-1536), and Hobbes (1588-1679)) who contributed to literary and rhetorical studies of the Bible and states that “the Bible exhibited rhetorical excellence.”<sup>174</sup> Last, Tribble presents a close analysis of the work of Herman Gunkel who shaped form criticism as a way of investigating types of literature. For him, the principles of form criticism include oral tradition, genre, setting in life, and extra-biblical parallels. Tribble does not entirely agree, perhaps, with Gunkel as she develops form criticism and moves toward rhetorical criticism, but she argues that this literary study links with rhetorical analysis directly, because the two share many applications and techniques.

Tribble begins her discussion with biblical rhetorical criticism by comparing Muilenburg and Gunkel. According to Tribble, Muilenburg suggests that “Gunkel endured – and there was more. The ‘more’ represented not the rejection of form criticism but its supplementation with rhetorical criticism.”<sup>175</sup> He pinpoints his special interest “in Hebrew composition, discerning structural patterns, verbal sequences, and stylistic devices that make a coherent whole.”<sup>176</sup> Muilenburg names this endeavor *rhetoric* and its methodology *rhetorical criticism*. Along with the classical rhetoric of previous times and literary critical theory, Muilenburg emphasizes that “rhetoric signifies the art of composition[. T]he method involves close reading of texts [and] the purpose is to

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 14–21.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. Tribble does not add her opinion on this discussion, and it seems like she supports her teacher by agreeing with his opinion: a responsible and proper articulation of the words in their linguistic patterns and in their precise formulations will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer’s thought, not only what it is that he thinks, but as he thinks it.

discover authorial intent.”<sup>177</sup> He suggests two tasks for the rhetorical critic. The first task is to define the limits of a literary unit by using the criteria of form and content. The second is to discern structure, to delineate overall design and individual parts. In his words, rhetoric contains two different types: 1) the art of composition and 2) the art of persuasion.<sup>178</sup>

Trible revisits the four components of the background of the Muilenburg proposal: classical rhetoric, literary critical theory, literary study of the Bible, and form criticism. These components have developed the background vastly. First, Along the development of biblical rhetorical criticism, Tribble indicates that the field of classical rhetoric also begins to expand. Scholars, such as Bernard Brock, Robert Scott, and James Chesebro, suggest a development of perspectives. They argue that

the field of rhetorical criticism has grown in the twentieth century not by a gradual accumulation of insights, one building upon another, but by different proposals and programs, each shifting the ground of the discipline. Over time, the

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> For those who understand rhetoric as the art of composition, Tribble includes a closer examination of such well known scholars as Jack Lundbom, Toni Craven, and Anthony Ceresko. They focus on particular texts and provide rhetorical exegesis. For example, Lundbom reads Jeremiah, focusing on artful speech, particularly in structure (*dispositio*) and style (*elocutio*). Craven reads Judith with attention to compositional analysis, pursuing careful descriptions of the text. Finally, Ceresko bases his argument on a reading of Samuel, concluding that the text demonstrates artistry and can be helpful to socio-cultural investigation. Since rhetoric is the art of persuasion, Tribble introduces scholars such as Jehoshua Gitay, who reads Second Isaiah regarding the text as an example of persuasive literature; Richard Clifford, who also reads Second Isaiah a little differently from Gitay, arguing that Second Isaiah uses a rhetoric of persuasion; John Barton, who argues that the prophets employ the rhetoric of persuasion as their speech skill; David Clines on Job; and Dale Patrick and Allen Scult on Job as well. For detailed study, see *ibid.*, 32–47.

old paradigm, the traditional model of reality, broke down from the weight of its own weaknesses, and new paradigms competed for allegiance.<sup>179</sup>

Trible agrees with these scholars and mentions that “in a pluralistic setting, models change, borders between disciplines open, and there are more possibilities than power dreams of. A plethora of rhetorical perspectives allows the Muilenburg mode a place to be without mandating that it stay in its place.”<sup>180</sup> Second, literary critical theory has also exploded. Mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective theories have experienced significant alterations. Beginning with Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*, in which he espoused conventions, archetypes, and literary history, and minimized the power of individual texts, four developments emerged: poetics (Tzvetan Todorov), structuralism (Ferdinand de Saussure), reader-response criticism (Susan Suleiman), and deconstruction (Jacques Derrida). Third, accordingly, since the 1960s, an application of the literary study of the Bible has also been enormously fruitful and transforming. This development constitutes a paradigm shift from the historical orientation to the literary.<sup>181</sup> Fourth, Tribble does not overlook problems raised with form criticism and cites John Hayes who writes about some problems including

too close an association with only the oral stages of tradition; the erroneous assumption that the shortest and clearest forms reflect the oldest and purest stages; the questionable use of the discipline to date traditions and texts; excessive claims

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>181</sup> Key scholars are as follows: Luis Alonso-Schokel, Edwin Good in 1960s; J.P. Fokkelman in 1970s; Robert Alter, Meir Sternberg, Northrop Frye, and Gabriel Josipovici in 1980s; Harold Bloom, Northrop Frye, Leland Ryken, and Tremper Longman in 1990s; and more recently, David Gunn, David Jobling, Cheryl Exum, Danna Fewell, Robert Polzin, James Crenshaw, Edgar Conrad, and Adele Berlin.

in the re-creation of settings for genres; and the confusion of genre elements with complete genres.<sup>182</sup>

While scholars recognize these problems, there are also other difficulties – for example, “confused usages of the term ‘form’; separation of style and content; imprecise definitions of *Gattung* and *Sitz im Leben*; uncertain connection between genres and settings; and lack of uniform terminology.”<sup>183</sup> Such a list threatened the demise of form criticism. As a result, new developments in form criticism appeared.

In sum, Tribble carefully lists the transitional context from form criticism to rhetorical criticism, making up for the weak points in the previous method. This is because she acknowledges the importance of transitional exchanges and makes sure readers understand the background of literary influences. In her analysis of the book of Jonah as an example of rhetorical criticism, Tribble especially accentuates the importance of the structure of the texts as well as genre, which is directly connected to the structure. She presents a full examination of the book of Jonah focusing on the development of the structure and language that the text utilizes. Through careful exegesis, she explores rhetorical skills hidden in the structure.

Tribble’s work would be stronger if she more carefully elaborated the analysis of the text’s setting and intention that she suggests as main tools of advanced form criticism. Unfortunately, Tribble’s own judgment about the editorial intention seems to be inconclusive. Indeed, she even expresses her dissatisfaction on the issue of intentionality. Perhaps her detailed structure analysis and close reading discern signals of a redactor’s

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<sup>182</sup> Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 81.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

own creative intentionality. However, as she points out the possible trickiness of defining the concept of intentionality, Tribble argues that “a text carries meanings its author never intended.”<sup>184</sup> Thus, according to her, authorial intentionality cannot be defined and even if it were known, intentionality cannot govern an interpretation of the text.

#### 2.2.2.11. Arie Van Der Kooij, 1998

In his book, *The Oracle of Tyre*, Arie van der Kooij provides a careful analysis and comparison between Septuagint (LXX) and Masoretic Text (MT) in Isa 23 and offers insights into the world of the ancient translator.<sup>185</sup> In chapter II, he analyzes the Masoretic Text of Isa 23 (the oracle of Tyre) and in chapter III, he analyzes the Septuagint version. With the outcome of these analyses, he insists that the Old Greek version of Isa 23 differs markedly from MT, particularly in verses 1–14, but if read in its own right, the Greek text is “a coherent text to a large extent, syntactically, stylistically, and semantically.”<sup>186</sup> Van der Kooij argues that the Septuagint translator of Isa 23 is not merely a pedantic wordsmith who seeks a literal rendering from the Hebrew to Greek. Rather, the translator is someone who produced a meaningful text.<sup>187</sup> The translator is more creative, insightful and engaging with the text. Moreover, the translator reads Isaiah and interprets it in his own perspective which is relevant to the political and cultural

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>185</sup> Arie Van Der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah 23 as Version and Vision* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill Academic Pub, 1998).

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.



milieu in which he lives. Van der Kooij indicates that the main difference between MT and LXX is “the presence and contextual function of ‘Carthage’ in the Greek text.”<sup>188</sup> In other words, MT talks about a destruction of Tyre but LXX describes “a destruction of Carthage with its serious consequences for Tyre.”<sup>189</sup> Such a change was available in the mind of the author who evaluated his situation as desperate to seek his identity. In other words, Van der Kooij points out that the differences between MT and LXX are not the result of mechanical errors but they are interpretation of contextual reading and exegesis.

Van der Kooij points out that the interpretations of the Greek version of Isa 23 by several scholars, such as Eusebius, Jerome, Theodoret, and Cyril, are different but “agree in their main aspects.”<sup>190</sup> He states that “although differing from each other in their exegesis on details of the text, from the hermeneutical point of view all our commentaries have a particular concept in common.”<sup>191</sup> Van der Kooij disagrees with the Christian scholars who relate Isa 23:1–14 to the siege of Tyre by the Babylonians and their king Nebuchadnezzar based on the connection with Ezek 27 because there is no specific interpretive links between these texts. Rather, his exegesis shows twofold interpretations: the first part of Isa 23 (vv. 1–14) to the time of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the later part to a much later period. For Van der Kooij, the interpretive stance is “in line with the ideas of the different settings and periods involved.”<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 188.

The methodology of Van der Kooij appears as a contextual exegesis which attempts to bear a theological harmony. He asserts that the Greek text itself expresses its own interpretation, it is its own work which has a whole meaning to deliver whether it is the same as the Hebrew or not.

#### 2.2.2.12. Martin Buss, 1999

In his book, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context*, Martin Buss sees a problem with the previous form critical analysis and argues that “an adequate form criticism is neither primarily diachronic nor simply synchronic.”<sup>193</sup> He believes that the use of form criticism is not for diachronic questions. Rather, he suggests a new form critical approach which he calls “transchronic.”<sup>194</sup> The transchronic approach is based on the objection that form criticism depends too much on diachronic questions. In his earlier work, Buss argues that the most important task of form criticism is recognizing “what solutions represent a fit response to a given concern” but not analyzing “arbitrary conventions.”<sup>195</sup> He emphasizes that social and psychological investigation supports dynamic relations in order to effectively understand “a translation of an ancient word.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Martin Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 413.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Martin Buss, ed., *Encounter with the Text: Form and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979), 32.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 32–33.

In this regard, Buss sees a promising way of biblical interpretation in relational form criticism which traces connections between aspects of literary form and observes literary phenomena of interdisciplinary interaction as well as cross cultural comparisons.<sup>197</sup> He writes:

A relational understanding of form does not envision that connections are rigid and thus universal in a monistic way but rather sees and values variety. At the same time, it believes that phenomena are not altogether arbitrary but reflect shared, although contingent, processes. It thus seeks an insight into form that looks for (moderate) appropriateness or likelihood rather than for either necessity or pure randomness.<sup>198</sup>

In other words, Buss believes that biblical form criticism examines how the biblical text interrelates with thoughts and moods reflecting social structure and personal experience in life. In this sense, he proposes that the “relational approach” to form criticism is the key to the interpretation of biblical forms.<sup>199</sup>

In particular, Buss presents a diagram using symbols to illustrate his understanding of form study.<sup>200</sup> This diagram includes his argument that form criticism itself is in relation with other elements such as thoughts, moods, experience, social structure, relatively independent cultures, historically connected cultures, and biblical text. All of these complexes are more or less interconnected together, but they are not entirely

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<sup>197</sup> Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context*, 419.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 419–420.

<sup>199</sup> Martin Buss, *The Changing Shape of Form Criticism: A Relational Approach* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), xiv.

<sup>200</sup> Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context*, 8.

accidental or deterministic. Therefore, Buss believes that a complete form criticism must regard “all aspects of literature—verbal, ideational, and pragmatic—together, which he terms “complexes of relations.”<sup>201</sup> For him, consideration of the interrelationship among these aspects leads to the most effective understanding of forms and their interpretations in terms of their philosophical, psychological, and social dimensions expressed and communicated in the biblical text. He continually develops his view of form criticism as “in his publications.”<sup>202</sup>

In summary, Buss’s approach to form criticism with his understanding of the interrelationship of all aspects suggested above contributes to the rethinking of the role of experience, social dimensions, and cultures in the analysis of biblical literature. He opens our understanding of form criticism suggesting that both diachronic and synchronic approaches are required organically. However, the question of how interpreters combine and consider all these intangible aspects in practice is not clear.

#### 2.2.2.13. Carol Newsom, 2003

The thesis of Carol Newsom’s book, *The Book of Job*, focuses on the diversity of genre in the book of Job.<sup>203</sup> Newsom looks at genres and asks how different genres have their own independent moral imaginations as well as how the book of Job can convey so

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<sup>201</sup> Buss, *The Changing Shape of Form Criticism*, 217.

<sup>202</sup> Martin Buss, *The Concept of Form in the Twentieth Century* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008); Buss, *The Changing Shape of Form Criticism*.

<sup>203</sup> Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003).

many different kinds of moral imaginations without favoring one over the other. Newsom introduces Bakhtin's understanding of polyphonic text which has three distinctive aspects: 1) it embodies a dialogic sense of truth; 2) the author's position, although represented in the text, is not privileged; and 3) the polyphonic text ends without finalizing closure.<sup>204</sup> Pointing out the problematic basis of monologic truth,<sup>205</sup> Bakhtin's notions of dialogical truth challenge the dominant monological and systemic concept of truth.

For Newsom, the book of Job includes multiple genres and that is why we have to read the text with synchronic understanding in order to understand the setting of the social world of the text. In other words, the book of Job is a polyphonic text.<sup>206</sup> Understanding the different moral imaginations of different genres will make us ethical participants in the dialogue of Job. A good ethical approach to the book of Job is through this understanding of divergent imagination. If the reader fails to have that understanding, then the reader is living in a monologic framework, going through the position that either Job is pious or not. However, Newsom asserts that:

the polyphonic author of Job chooses to begin the book with the didactic prose tale not only because of its narrative form but also because it is an intensely monologic genre...The polyphonic author's task is to dialogize the prose tale, which he does by interrupting its closed narration with the very different genre of

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>205</sup> Newsom argues that the monologic conception of truth is the conception that dominates modern thought. The monologic truth is essentially propositional and repeatable by others. Moreover, it seeks unity and tends to gravitate toward an inflexible system. For further study, see *ibid.*, 21–22.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 26–27.

the wisdom dialogue...This wisdom dialogue embodies very different value concerning the way truth is to be apprehended.<sup>207</sup>

This new technique of interrupting genres in the book of Job creates “a radically intense form of this cultural confrontation.”<sup>208</sup>

Newsom argues that a polyphonic reading carefully looks at “issues of genre and verbal texture” and “the multiple ideological claims of the text.”<sup>209</sup> Consequently there is no final meaning of the book of Job, as a Bakhtinian approach to literature emphasizes communication that is elastic, evocative, unsystematic and non-final. The notorious elusive meaning of the book was simply the result of a rhetorical strategy required for the creation of a polyphonic text.

#### 2.2.2.14. David Carr, 2005

In his book, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, David Carr examines the oral-written memorized forms in texts by using sociological, anthropological, and postcolonial methods.<sup>210</sup> He insists that the present form of the Hebrew Bible was shaped for oral-written memorization, performance, and education.<sup>211</sup> He investigates oral-written

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 24–25.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>210</sup> David Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 3–14.

memorized forms in texts from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece and examines the educational enculturation system from those resources. Having found the phenomenon of oral-written memorized form in each nation respectively, Carr argues that “memorization and recitation of standard texts” was the educational system that shaped the minds of students, and this occurs in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>212</sup> For him, structure in texts was designed for oral-musical performance to facilitate easy memorization by scribes.<sup>213</sup>

Carr argues that ancient Israelite scribes educated their students with oral-written memorized forms and explains how the scriptures survived after the fall of Jerusalem. When he analyzed ancient Israel’s literacy, he concluded that only the educated elite scribes such as priests could transmit their oral-written memorized forms, although the rate of literacy increased in the late pre-exilic period. He states “it still seems unlikely that Jews could have carried trunkloads of holy scrolls from the ruins of the temple to Babylonian exile.”<sup>214</sup> Carr proposes that “the exile was a time of renewed focus on Israel’s pre-land traditions, the Mosaic Torah, with radical reformulations of those pre-land traditions being done in the oral-written matrices of both royal, nonpriestly scribal circles and priestly groups.”<sup>215</sup> Carr insists that the *Sitz im Leben* for the formation and transmission of all texts in the biblical stream of tradition is the process of education and other forms of cultural reproduction.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 8–9.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 292.

Previously, scholars like Gunkel highlighted oral speech forms and insisted that orality took priority over writing for understanding the origin of texts. However, Carr argues that the oral-written memorized form combined the orality and writing together with the purpose of the educational enculturation.

### 2.2.3. Conclusion

Under the influence of these approaches, form criticism is well developed and provides the basis for both the synchronic and the diachronic interpretation of biblical literature. As form criticism is able to interact with other critical methodologies, I strongly believe that it will continue to serve as a fundamental method of biblical interpretation. Sweeney and Ben Zvi emphasize that form critics now have to avoid any restriction of “the presumed authors of texts or the reconstructions of their presumed sociohistorical settings and intentions” because texts are “composed by authors, whose outlooks and techniques are influenced by their respective sociohistorical contexts.”<sup>217</sup> They believe that traditional form criticism accommodates the newer insights and continue to make way for the new approaches with its vitality as a living methodology.<sup>218</sup>

With these considerations above, the driving goal of form-critical method for my study is an examination of the forms, genres, life settings, and intentions of the texts because the relationship between language and the social and literary settings are very close. Such settings provide common conventions of language for human communication,

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<sup>217</sup> Sweeney and Ben Zvi, *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, 10.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.



while language influences the settings. Therefore, the relationship between these elements is tightly interwoven. The overriding questions for this study are: Who is speaking? Who are the listeners? What is the life situation within which a speech is being told? And what is the aim of the speech? This study will analyze texts synchronically based on the examination of structures and genres and diachronically based on the examination of settings and intentions.

## CHAPTER THREE: EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MATERIALS

### 3.1. Introduction

The socio-political dimension of ancient Israel was moved and influenced by the smaller powers of Syria-Palestine as well as the great power centers of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The history of ancient Israel was, therefore, closely interrelated with the history of these powers and dynamics of their power struggles. Understanding these circumstances is a key factor to interpret the Book of Hosea as the prophet carefully considers the political dimension of the Northern Kingdom and its future direction. A prophet is one who delivers God's message to the Israelite, judging past and current status of their spiritual, social, and political situations as well as tense international relationships which affect them immensely. The Book of Hosea as a prophetic literature plays a significant role in observing problems, making a correct diagnosis, and asserting future steps.

Unfortunately, previous scholarship ignores the value of the Ancient Near Eastern materials. On the one hand, scholars generally ignore any relationship before King Hezekiah, the first monarch who had a contact with Babylonia in the Bible based on 2 Kgs 20:12, "at that time King Merodach-baladan son of Baladan of Babylon sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick." This serves to explain scholarly argument that Hammurabi's Law Code (Mesopotamian legal forms) during the Babylonian period influenced the writings of Israel. Similarly, other scholars trace a little earlier contact/relationship with Tiglath-Pileser III as the first king to invade because he is first mentioned in 2 Kgs 15:19–20, "King Pul of Assyria

came against the land; Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, so that he might help him confirm his hold on the royal power...So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land.”<sup>1</sup> These scholars ignore earlier monarchs of Israel because they are not mentioned in the Bible. However, this assumption is critically problematic because if one considers historical records, from the reign of King Ahab ben Omri in the mid-ninth century through the reign of Joash ben Jehoahaz in the mid-eighth century BCE, they provide another understanding of Israel’s relationship with Assyrian Empire.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, scholars acknowledge some of important Assyrian inscriptions but hesitate to draw a relation from them. For example, in her book, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, Paula McNutt, who is a famous social sciences scholar, believes that the extrabiblical literary sources (e.g. inscriptions of Shalmaneser III) provide information about sociopolitical organization and structure which may have an effect on the system of Israel and Judah. However, she does not reflect the Assyrian materials in her study of “Economy” as well as “Political institutions of Ancient Israel,” even though

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<sup>1</sup> During the reign of King Pekah, King Tiglath-pileser III came to Israel and captured many cities. When Judah was attacked by the kings of Aram and Israel, King Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-pileser III for help. See 2 Kgs 15:29; 16:7–8

<sup>2</sup> Marvin Sweeney in his article proposes that Assyria was a major power in Israel’s and Judah’s history from the ninth century BCE through the late seventh century BCE. However, the narrative of the Books of Kings does not present a clear picture of this relationship because the Books of Kings are books of theological reflection on the history of Israel and Judah. Namely, both Israel and Judah were closely related with Assyria. The interpreters, therefore, have to understand the theological agenda which points to the didactic character of the Kings narrative to pursue Israel’s reflection on their history. See Marvin A. Sweeney, “The Portrayal of Assyria in the Book of Kings,” in *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God Through Historically Dissimilar Traditions*, ed. Randall Heskett and Brian Irwin (New York: T & T Clark International, 2010), 274–84.

she states that the materials prove that “Israel became a loyal Assyrian vassal when Jehu came to the throne.”<sup>3</sup>

The recognition of the importance of the Ancient Near Eastern materials is one of the key factors to understand the relationship between northern Israel and Assyria. During the period of Neo-Assyrian expansion westward, northern Israel’s political relationship with Assyria was very influential in their history, and the relationships with Phoenicia and Aram-Damascus were also considerable. The Ancient Near Eastern materials in our hands provide substantial and critical sources for examining the dynamics of relationships among the countries.

The materials that this dissertation analyzes are some inscriptions of Shalmaneser III and of Adad Nirari III, who were kings of Assyria during 858-811 BCE. 1) The Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III proves that there was a strong coalition in Syria-Palestine and that one of the members of the coalition was Israel. 2) The “Baghdad Tablet,” 3) “III R 5, 6,” and 4) the Marble-Slab Inscription are important evidence to prove the political relationship during the period of the threat of Shalmaneser III. 5) The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III which shows King Jehu, the founder of the Jehu dynasty, bowing at Shalmaneser III’s feet in submission is also very important evidence to prove the political policy of Israel. Furthermore, 6) the Rimah Stele of Adad Nirari III, which King Adad Nirari III lists King Joash of Israel, a member of the house of Jehu, as one of his tributaries, continues to account the pro-Assyrian policy of the house of Jehu. 7) The

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<sup>3</sup> Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 147, 154–176.

Calah Slab also indicates the dynamics of power relation in the Syria-Palestine area as well as the continuing foreign policy of Israel along with other states during this time.

The examination of these materials will provide new data for the history of northern Israel and their political situation. Each Ancient Near Eastern material will be analyzed in detail, focusing on the reconstruction of political and commercial relations of the time.

### 3.2. Ancient Near Eastern Materials

In the past, most scholars assumed that there were clear intertextual relationships between Hammurabi's Law Code and Exodus, and that Israel was influenced by Hammurabi right from the beginning of Babylon. These scholars argued that Hezekiah's time (715-687 BCE) was the first textual evidence to connect Israel with Babylon because 2 Kgs 20:12 clearly states, "at that time King Merodach-baladan son of Baladan of Babylon sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick." Otherwise, there is no textual reference to relations with Babylon. Therefore, the scholarly assumption about the background of the legal form in the biblical text derived from Hammurabi's Law Code during this time seems to be plausible. For example, David Wright argues that the Covenant Code is directly dependent on Hammurabi's Law Code, possibly between 740-640 BCE, but that it does

not function as a true law code.<sup>4</sup> He believes that the Covenant Code revised Hammurabi's Law Code in order to produce "a corpus that was more coherent legislatively by solving problems and questions in its sources."<sup>5</sup> In a different view, Van Seters argues that Covenant Code must be placed in the time of Babylonian exile because that is when Judah encounters Babylon.<sup>6</sup> He argues that the Covenant Code was for the diaspora with minimal cultic requirements, humanitarian concerns including social conflict with foreigners, and some laws for the community life under the empire. Thus, it is clear that Van Seters even ignores Hezekiah's relationship with Babylon. However, what is missing here is the vassal treaty relationship between Israel and Assyria from the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Hosea's use of Mesopotamian legal forms proves that there is clear influence from Assyria. I argue that the scholarship in the past has been far too simplistic with regard to Hosea, and not really attuned to understanding the relationship with the Assyrian Empire. Therefore, scholarly discussion about the dating of the Book of Hosea, the interpretation of the issues that he raises, and influences on the understanding of the Pentateuch were limited.

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<sup>4</sup> David Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 115–118, 346–359.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 351. Wright argues that the author of the Covenant Code has used copies of Hammurabi's Law Code in a Judean frame. Along with the similarities in the structure and content, Wright states that there is evidence of usage from other cuneiform law collections supplemented with native Israelite-Judean traditions.

<sup>6</sup> John Van Seters, *A Law Book for the Diaspora: Revision in the Study of the Covenant Code* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

### 3.2.1. Analysis of Assyrian inscriptions of Shalmaneser III

The reign of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE), king of Assyria, was regarded as an important period as he influenced all states in the Syria-Palestine area more than any former kings of Assyria due to his military expansion project. Numerous records about Shalmaneser III are well preserved so his regnal years are easily tracked. A complete list of his eponyms is available elsewhere and is not difficult to match with the modern calendar.<sup>7</sup> Shalmaneser III was able to accomplish his campaigns and collect gifts and tributes from most states of Syria-Palestine. Following his father, Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE), who was the real founder of the Neo-Assyrian empire, Shalmaneser III sent force to expand westward, and as a result, most states in this western area such as Aram-Damascus, Israel, and the Phoenician states had to face military threat and suffering. Shalmaneser III's interest toward the west due to its economic and geographic benefit never stopped and caused political, military, and economic turmoil in the Syria-Palestine region. Consequently, the pressure of Shalmaneser III made it possible to begin a sort of coalition to defend the powerful force of Assyria, and the members of the coalition were possibly Adad-idri of Aram-Damascus, Irhuleni of Hamath, and Ahab of Israel as indicated in the report of the list of his campaign in the form of the *palû* of Shalmaneser III.<sup>8</sup> Another evidence of the size of the coalition is the description of the "twelve kings

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<sup>7</sup> See Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC: II (858-745 BC)*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Shalmaneser III engaged with the coalition in his sixth, tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth years of *palû*. Discussion about the meaning of *palû* is still under debate. Scholars found conflict between the account of a king's reign by *palû* when comparing with their reigns of historical texts. Jeffrey Kuan understands *palû* as a "campaign year."

of the seacoast” who fought together against Assyria as indicated in several inscriptions. Thus, the inscriptions in relation to the campaigns of Shalmaneser III provide significant data about the relationship between northern Israel and other countries during this time period. This section will provide the description of the objects with the inscription with additional information such as where and when the objects were found. The partial focused text from each object will be used for the discussion of this paper. Then, a brief summary of each content with possible argument will follow.

#### 3.2.1.1. The Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III

The so-called “Kurkh Monoliths” are two limestone steles found in Kurkh, one of provinces in the Southeastern Anatolia region of Turkey: One is the stele of the annals of Ashurnasirpal II, which presents the detail of his campaign in 879 BCE when Assyrians attacked the lands of the Upper Tigris in the Diyabakir region, and the other is the stele of the annals of Shalmaneser III, which presents the achievement of Shalmaneser III’s campaign. The two steles were found in October 1861 by John Taylor who was a political agent of the East India Company. Currently these steles are preserved at the British

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Cf. Hayim Tadmor, “The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study,” *JCS* 12, no. 3 (1958): 22–40, 77–100. For the history and meaning of *Limmu* and the reasons for the switch to the *palû* system, see Tammi J. Schneider, *A New Analysis of the Royal Annals of Shalmaneser III* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1991), 68–79.



Museum. Between them, the stele of Shalmaneser III is very important to support the political background and the policies of kingdoms during the time of King Ahab.

The Kurkh monolith of Shalmaneser III was made in limestone, a round-topped stele. The cuneiform inscription was engraved in two columns, one is on the obverse and the other is on reverse. At the front, the image of Shalmaneser III stands looking at the four divine emblems: 1) the winged disk, the symbol of the god Ashur or Shamash; 2) the six-pointed star of Ishtar, goddess of the morning and evening star; 3) the crown of the sky-god Anu which has three horns; 4) the disk and crescent of the god, Sin. Moreover, there are many divine symbols carved in relief such as Salmaneser III's amulets with the symbol of the weather god, Adad, an eight-pointed star in a disk which is probably the symbol of Shamash, the sun-god, and a winged disk which represents the god Ashur. These divine symbols represent the power and legitimacy of Shalmaneser III. Along with these symbols, there is a cuneiform inscription written around him and the sides of the stele. The written report of his campaign against the Aramean Coalition is critically significant as this describes and supports the historical background of his military campaigns regarding when and how his campaigns were executed and the results of the battles. Moreover, the report reflects political shifts of other states during the reign of Shalmaneser III.

The annalistic text includes 156 lines inscribed over the image of the king on the stele and provides information and achievements of Shalmaneser III's military operation, probably in his sixth year of reign. Scholars usually pay attention to the account of the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. However, the inscription provides a much more valuable

account of political background at that time. The focus of such information is King Ahab and his political attitude toward Assyria. In the inscription, Shalmaneser III states:

(II 89b-99a)

I moved out from the city Argana and approached the city Qarqara (qar-qa-ra). I destroyed, tore down and burned the city Qarqara, his royal residence. 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalries, 20,000 foot soldiers of Adad-idri (i.e., Hadadezer, Ben-Hadad II) of Damascus (Imērišu), 700 chariots, 700 cavalries, 10,000 foot soldiers of Irhuleni from the land Hamath, *2,000 chariots, 10,000 foot soldiers of Ahab(a-ha-ab-bu), the Israelite*, 500 soldiers of Que, 1,000 soldiers from the land Musri, 10 chariots, and 10,000 soldiers from the land Irqanata, 200 soldiers of Matinuba'al from the city Arvad, 200 soldiers of the land Usanata, 30 chariots, 10,000 soldiers of Adunu-ba'al from the land Shian, 1,000 camels of Gindibu', from the land Arabia, [...] soldiers of Ba'sa, son of Ruhubi, from the land Ammon. He made his alliance of twelve kings. *They rose against me* for a battle. I fought with them with the mighty forces of Aššur, which Ashur, my lord, gave me, and the strong weapons which Nergal, my leader, has presented to me. I defeated them between the cities of Qarqara and Gilzau. I killed 14,000 of their soldiers with the sword, rained down upon them flood like Adad when he makes a rainstorm pour down. I spread their corpses, filling the entire land with soldiers with the sword spread out <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> All Akkadian translations are mine; italics added for emphasis are also mine. The cuneiform inscription was published by Henry C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* (London: R. E. Bowler, 1861), 349. The transliteration of the original text and detailed bibliography of the original text can be found in Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, 11–24. Another transliteration with a translation in English, see Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 29–31. Other translations in English, see James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 278–279; Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, 23–24.

Based on the inscription, Shalmanaser III indicates that there was a coalition against him and he defeated them in the battle. This Aramean coalition of the twelve kings consists of troops from Adad-idri of Damascus, Irkhuleni of Hamath, Ahab of Israel, Gindibu the Arab, Byblos, Egypt, and Arvad.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the Syro-Palestinian states in general cooperated against the army of Shalmanaser III, and Israel and Aram-Damascus together formed an army base during the reign of Ahab. The coalition fought with Assyria in order to defend against any future trouble by the rising power of Assyria. This inscription proves that King Ahab's political policy was clearly anti-Assyrian.

Scholars generally pay attention to the tensions between the Assyrian account of this battle and biblical records in 1 Kgs 20–22 during the reign of Ahab ben Omri of Israel.<sup>11</sup> It is because these scholars believe that Ahab did not join into the coalition against Assyria but rather fight against Arameans at Ramoth Gilead in order to stop Hadadezer from taking the territories of Israel, especially the Trans-Jordan area.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Albert K. Grayson, "Assyria: Ashur-Dan II to Ashur-Nirari V (954-745 B.C.)," in *CAH Vol. 3, Part 1: The Prehistory of the Balkans; The Middle East and the Aegean World, Tenth to Eighth Centuries B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 261.

<sup>11</sup> There are three suggestions on the scholarly debate about the contrast between the accounts of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern materials: 1) the battles in 1 Kings 20 took place during the early rather than the latter years of Ahab's reign; 2) the battles occurred probably near the end of Ahab's reign; 3) the battles were not related to Ahab but originally belonged to the period of the Jehu dynasty. See Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 36–37.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview discussion of Shalmaneser III and Shamshi-Adad V, see Grayson, "Assyria," 259–271. For a further discussion of the battle at Ramoth Gilead, see Sweeney, "The Portrayal of Assyria in the Book of Kings," 276–277. Sweeney argues that the narratives concerning Israel's wars with Aram and the death of King Ahab at Ramoth Gilead were the theological interpretation of the DtrH in order to portray Ahab as a sinful monarch.

However, in his article, “The Portrayal of Assyria in the Books of Kings,” Marvin Sweeney argues that Ahab clearly served as an active member of the Aramean coalition against Assyria but his losses of chariots and trained soldiers left Israel vulnerable.<sup>13</sup> For Sweeney, several inscriptions, such as the Moabite Stone, the Deir ‘Alla inscription, and the Tel Dan inscription, show that the Trans-Jordan area was taken by Aram and Moab during the mid-ninth through the mid-eighth century BCE.<sup>14</sup> In 2 Kgs 10:32–33 reports that Hazael was able to take the Transjordan area from Israel. Moreover, Baruch Levine’s thorough analysis of the Deir ‘Alla inscription in the Anchor Bible Commentary provides the historical setting of the trans-Jordan area that Aramean expansion encompassed all of Gilead from the early ninth century BCE through the end of century.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Israel’s failure of controlling its territories provided the context of why Israel turned to Assyria as an ally. However, Levine argues that “before the Assyrian campaigns, the population of central Transjordan had been predominantly Israelite.”<sup>16</sup> According to Sweeney, as a result of these subsequent events, Israel finally regained its lost territory in the Trans-

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<sup>13</sup> Sweeney, “The Portrayal of Assyria in the Book of Kings,” 276–277.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 277. For a discussion of the Moabite Stone, which represents the 9<sup>th</sup> century defeat of Israel by King Mesha of Moab, see Pritchard, *ANET*, 320–321. For the Deir Alla Inscription, which celebrates Aramean victory over Israel, see JoAnne Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ‘Alla* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984); Meindert Dijkstra, “Is Balaam Also Among the Prophets?,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 43–64. For the Tel Dan Inscription, which also celebrates an Aramean King’s defeat of Israel in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, see Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, “An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan,” *IEJ* 43 (1993): 81–98; Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, “The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment,” *IEJ* 45 (1995): 1–18.

<sup>15</sup> Baruch Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 264.

Jordan area. I agree that Hadadezer (Ben Hadad)'s capricious change of political stance for his ambition to take more territories, believing that such a military gaining secures his country, led him to break the relationship with Israel. Therefore, Israel could not continue the previous relationship with Aram.

In his book, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, Jeffrey Kuan thoroughly examines the detail of the inscription and argues that Shalmaneser III's report in this inscription is probably exaggerated for four reasons: 1) the Assyrian army did not move southward; 2) the inscription did not mention the capture of cities or booties; 3) there was no tax exaction from the members of coalition; 4) Shalmaneser III did not return to the region until his tenth regnal year.<sup>17</sup> According to Kuan, it is clear that in his sixth regnal year, Shalmaneser III took the campaign against Syro-Palestinian states. Kuan argues that at that time, northern Israel was one of strong members of the coalition at the battle of Qarqar, refusing submission to the Assyrian power.<sup>18</sup> Israel at that time was strong enough to rule other states like Judah, Edom, and Moab. Thus, their intention in constituting the coalition was probably seeking economic stability.<sup>19</sup> In other words, Kuan believes that the Aramean coalition against the Assyrian army was motivated by the coalition's interest in protecting local autonomy and economic prosperity.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 46–47.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Moshe Elat argues that the goal of Assyrian foreign policy in this period was to open trade and eventually to dominate Egypt. See Moshe Elat, "The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt," *JAOS* 98, no. 1 (1978): 20–34. Cf. Mitch Allen,

The Kurkh Monolith provides evidence of a political background of northern Israel during the reign of King Ahab. According to Kuan, there is no possibility of any coalition existing in southern Syria-Palestine during the early years of Shalmaneser III. Therefore, the force of the Assyrian army under Shalmaneser III was the catalyst for the coalition to call for all powers and defend the region. Aram-Damascus was absolutely a strong power along with northern Israel. Therefore, many scholars believe that the army of Shalmaneser III was possibly halted by the coalition of nations led by Adad-idri (Hadadezer) of Aram-Damascus and King Ahab of Israel as one of members.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the power of the coalition and their anti-Assyrian policy seems to be working continuously during the reign of King Ahab.

#### 3.2.1.2. The “Baghdad Tablet”

The so-called “Baghdad Tablet”<sup>22</sup> is inscribed in a large clay tablet (31cm X 23cm) which was found in the outer wall of Aššur. The inscription contains reports of the first sixteen years of the reign of Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria. The text consists of 256 lines in four columns and it is a complete text, describing his military campaigns down to 843 BCE. The tablet was purchased by the Iraq Museum and numbered as IM

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“Power Is in the Details: Administrative Technology and the Growth of Ancient Near Eastern Cores,” in *The Historical Evolution of World-Systems*, ed. Christopher Chase-Dunn and E. N. Anderson (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 75–91.

<sup>21</sup> Grayson, “Assyria,” 261–262. Grayson states that the result of the battle is uncertain. However, the Aramean coalition displays sufficient strength so “Assyria did not win a great victory on this occasion but neither did she suffer a great defeat.”

<sup>22</sup> This tablet is located in the Iraq Museum, and the museum number is IM54669.

54669. The text was first published by George Cameron in his article, “The Annals of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria.” Cameron argues that the text should be dated to 842 BCE as the third edition of Shalmaneser III’s annals.<sup>23</sup> The inscription proves that Shalmaneser III was continually confronted by the anti-Assyrian coalition. In his tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth *palû*, Shalmaneser III again fought with the anti-Assyrian coalition and recorded that he slaughtered and plundered them. The remarkable points of the inscription are below:

(II 55-III 9)

In my tenth *palû*, I crossed the Euphrates for the eighth time...I destroyed and plundered them. At that time, *Adad-idri of Damascus, Irhuleni from the land Hamath, as well as twelve kings of the seacoast*, trusted in their own power and rose up against me to wage combat and battle. I fought with them, accomplished their defeat, and took away chariots, their cavalries, and their implements of battle. They fled to save their lives.

In my eleventh *palû*, I left Nineveh. For the ninth time, I crossed the Euphrates at high flood. I went down to the cities of the land Hamath, captured the city Ashtammaku together with other eighty nine cities, slaughtered and plundered them. At that time *Adad-idri from the land Damascus, Irhuleni from the land Hamath, as well as twelve kings of the seacoast*, put their trust in their own power and rose up against me to wage combat and battle. I fought with them, defeated them, smote with the sword 10,000 of their soldiers, and deprived them of their chariots, their cavalries, and their implements of battle.

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<sup>23</sup> George Cameron, “The Annals of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria,” *Sum* 6 (1950): 7. Cameron believes that the first edition of Shalmaneser III’s annals is the Monolith Inscription made in his sixth year. The second edition is the Gates of Balawat inscription made in his ninth year.

(III 24 – 33)

In my fourteenth palû, I mustered the people of my widespread land in countless numbers and with 120,000 soldiers crossed the Euphrates at high flood. At that time *Adad-idri from the land Damascus, Irhuleni from the land Hamath, as well as twelve kings of the seacoast* – the upper and the lower -- mustered their countless armies and arose against me. I battled with them, defeated them, destroyed their chariots, their cavalries, and deprived them of their implements of battle. They fled to save their lives.<sup>24</sup>

The inscription explains that Adad-idri of Aram-Damascus and Irhuleni, the Hamathite, are leaders of the coalition, and with them twelve kings of the seacoast united together. In this statement, unlike the monolith inscription, an Israel king is not mentioned. Although there is no indication of the name of an Israelite king directly, the text has given me the impression that Israel and Judah were strong members of the coalition based on the previous relationship and continuing powerful threat from Assyria. According to Kuan, during this time, the western anti-Assyrian coalition became “a broader regional coalition, involving almost every state in Syria-Palestine. Israel and Judah must have continued its strong participants in the coalition.”<sup>25</sup> Basically, Kuan is saying that Israel and Judah could not be excluded from the coalition. Kuan is surely right about the assumption that Israel and Judah were strong participation in the coalition because the campaigns of Shalmaneser III were troubled by the western anti-coalition,

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Ibid., 22–23; Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 48–50.

<sup>25</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 51. Kuan is following the hypothesis that one king, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, ruled both Israel and Judah from 848 BCE through 841 BCE. Cf. John Strange, “Joram, King of Israel and Judah,” *VT* 25, no. 2 (1975): 191–201.



and the achievement of the coalition confirmed that their allied forces would stop Assyrian army. Moreover, the relationship between Israel and Aram during this time was not that of alliance. Rather, Israel was a vassal of Aram from the later days of King Omri.<sup>26</sup> The biblical text in 1 Kgs 20:1–9 records the threat of Ben Hadad of Aram who ruled and controlled much of southern Syria and Palestine. Under this vassal relationship, Israel's participation would be expected. The evidences from the so-called “Baghdad Text” add weight to the argument that Israel was a strong member of the anti-coalition continually during the reigns of Ahaziah and Joram, sons of Ahab.

### 3.2.1.3. III R 5, 6

The III R 5, 6 is a fragment inscription about the events of the eighteenth year of Shalmaneser III in detail. It was discovered in the central palace of Shalmaneser III at Nimrud. The annalistic text was published by Henry Rawlinson in 1861.<sup>27</sup> He states that this part of the annals of Shalmaneser provides details of the war against Hazael of Syria and “receipt of tribute from Tyre, Sidon and Jehu of Samaria, in BC 842.”<sup>28</sup> The text reads:

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<sup>26</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, “The Legacy of Josiah in Isaiah 40-55,” in *Reading Prophetic Books: Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-Biblical Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 50–51; *ibid.*, 120–121.

<sup>27</sup> Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. 3, Plate 5, No. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

In my eighteenth palû, I crossed the Euphrates for the sixteenth time. *Hazael of Damascus relied on his numerous armies* and called up his soldiers in great number, making the mount Saniru, a mountain facing the Lebanon, as his fortress. I fought with him and defeated him. I slaughtered with the sword 16,000 of his experienced soldiers. I took away from him 1,121 chariots, 470 cavalries, and his camp. He left in order to save his life but I followed him and besieged him in Damascus, his royal city. I cut down his orchards. I marched as far as the mountains of Hauran. I destroyed, tore down and burned countless cities, and carried spoils away from them which were not countable. I marched as far as the mountains of Ba'il-ra'si which is at the side of the sea and erected there a stela with my self image as king. At that time, *I received the tribute of the Tyrians, the Sidonians, and Jehu, the Omrides*<sup>29</sup> (*Ia-ú-a mâr Hu-um-ri-i*).

The inscription includes the description of Shalmaneser III's sixteenth campaign, his achievements, and the list of tributes. Some remarkable points of the report are observed. First, the continuous indication of the force of coalition or the statement, "twelve kings of the seacoast," in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III disappears in this inscription. His earlier campaigns in Syria-Palestine were held in his sixth, tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth regnal years. However, in the text of III R 5, 6, the only force against the Assyrian army is described as Hazael of Damascus. Second, the co-leader, Irhuleni, the Hamathite, who previously fought against the Assyrian army, is not mentioned in this present account. Third, the leader of Aram-Damascus is no longer Adad-idri but Hazael. According to Kuan, the reason the coalition became weak is the new dynasty coming onto the throne.

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<sup>29</sup> The translation of "Jehu, son of Omri" in scholarship is not certain. H. Tadmor's attempt to translate it as "Jehu, the king of Bit-Humri is also rejected by Kuan. Rather, Kuan argues that "the phrase DUMU<sup>URU</sup>GN is used to denote a citizen or native of a city or a country." Therefore, the phrase should be understood as a synonym to the gentilics such as Tyrians and Sidonians. For the discussion of the translation, see Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 52–53, n. 167.

Kuan believes that in the treaty custom in the Ancient Near East, the treaty relationship lasts “only during the life of the dynasty.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the death of Adad-idri led to the disintegration of the coalition, and that is why Hazael alone fought against Shalmaneser III. Last, the inscription clearly reports the tribute (*ma-da-tu*)<sup>31</sup> from Tyre, Sidon, and Jehu. This provides a great change in political situation, as after several attempts of forceful and influential campaigns of Shalmaneser III to west, he finally received tributes.

These conclusions indicate that the political relationship among the states in Syria-Palestine gets confused. Their previous military unity is broken. Some states even submit to Shalmaneser III, confirming their security in his campaigns. Jehu’s tribute is critically significant, as northern Israel changes its political stance and becomes an ally with Assyria. Jehu’s political move has to be viewed as a military strategy observing the situation of world in Jehu’s eyes. Kuan argues that the submission to Assyria has to be understood as “an attempt to buy Assyria’s support for his reign.”<sup>32</sup> This is a big change considering Israel’s previous coalition with states near Israel. The political policy of the Omri dynasty was anti-Assyria, but the new political policy represented in the inscription is obviously pro-Assyria. Therefore, reading any text during this period has to bear in mind this social-political influence and its aftermath as well. The tribute from King Jehu to Shalmaneser III proves evidently that Israel is allied with Assyria during the reign of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>31</sup> For a study of the kinds of tribute in the Ancient Near Eastern texts and especially about *maddattu*, see *ibid.*, 23 n. 53.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 59.

King Jehu and as will be shown continually, the new foreign policy began by King Jehu lasts in effect for the duration of the Jehu dynasty.

#### 3.2.1.4. The Marble-Slab Inscription

The Marble-Slab inscription is a large stone tablet (80 X 60 X 7 cms), one of the collection of Assyrian antiquities in the Iraq Museum. The inscription is the report of the annals of the first twenty campaigns of Shalmaneser III, presumably inscribed in 838 BCE on the first day of the month Tašritu of his twentieth *palû*. The tablet was discovered in the *liben* of the outer wall of Aššur and published by Fuad Safar in his article, “Further Text of Shalmaneser III from Assur”.<sup>33</sup> The Marble-Slab inscription is unique as 1) it is the fourth edition of the royal annals and 2) it provides the detailed history of four campaigns, the seventeenth through the twentieth. From the beginning of the text, the inscription briefly summarizes the previous sixteen campaigns and as the purpose of the inscription, the last four campaigns are dealt with in detail. Among the four campaigns, it is easily recognizable that the eighteenth campaign is the most important.<sup>34</sup> The inscription shows parallels with III R 5, 6 as both deal with the events of the king’s eighteenth *palû*, but there are slight variations. For example, the number of soldiers are different (16,020 vs 16,000) and the geographic explanation is developed in

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<sup>33</sup> Fuad Safar, “A Further Text of Shalmaneser III from Assur,” *Sum* 7 (1951): 3–21.

<sup>34</sup> See *ibid.*, 1–2.

the later version to be more specific.<sup>35</sup> The most notable change is the name of Jehu in Akkadian form. The text states,

I received the tributes (ma-da-tu) of Ba'-li-ma-AN-zēr, of the Tyrians, and Jehu, the Omrides (*Ia-a-ú mâr Hu-um-ri-i*). On my return, I climbed the Lebanon. I erected a stela of my self image as a king beside the stela of Tiglath-pileser, the great king, my predecessor.

The name of Jehu is *Ia-a-ú* in this text instead of *Ia-ú-a* which appears in the III R 5, 6 text, the Black Obelisk, and the Kurba'il Statue.<sup>36</sup> Scholars believe that this kind of variation of foreign names is common in Akkadian literature. Kuan argues that other kings' names were also represented in various cases in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions. Therefore, he believes that the difference occurs because "the particular scribe heard the name being articulated or different scribal conventions."<sup>37</sup> According to the Marble-Slab inscription, the King Jehu, the Omride, paid *ma-da-tu* and again confirms the relationship between Assyria and northern Israel in the same way that III R 5, 6 shows. King Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III and stands firmly in the side of Assyria.

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<sup>35</sup> See Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> The analysis of the Kurba'il Statue including the record of the eighteenth regnal year of Shalmaneser III is omitted due to its parallels in this dissertation. For the discussion of the Kurba'il Statue, see J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "The Kurba'il Statue of Shalmaneser III," *IRAQ* 24, no. 2 (1962): 90–115.

<sup>37</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 62.

### 3.2.1.5. The Black Obelisk Inscription

The most famous inscription of Assyria is the Black Obelisk, discovered by Austen Layard at Calah (Nimrud) in December 1846. The obelisk is two meters in height and has four sides, and each side consists of five panels of reliefs which depict five subdued kings, bringing tributes to present to Shalmaneser III. The depictions reflect and emphasize Shalmaneser III's military achievements. The five kings are Sua of Gilzanu, Jehu of Bit Omri, an unnamed ruler of Musri, Marduk-apil-usur of Suhi, and Qalparunda of Patin. On the top and the bottom of the five panels of reliefs, a cuneiform inscription records and celebrates thirty-one successful years of military campaigns of Shalmaneser III. The inscription is well-preserved and contains the longest account of the reign of Shalmaneser III, including the narratives of his first year through his thirty first year of reign. The obelisk inscription briefly summarizes the previous campaigns as is customary in such historical records, while the story of the last two campaigns is given in full explanation. The accounts of his thirty and thirty-first year appear longer than all other accounts, giving hint that the inscription was engraved in 828 BCE or 827 BCE.<sup>38</sup>

The Black Obelisk is particularly important as it includes the epigraph accompanying the relief which shows King Jehu, the founder of the Jehu dynasty, bowing at the feet of Shalmaneser III, presenting King Jehu's submission. It is, therefore, an important evidence to prove the vassal relationship between Assyria and northern Israel. However, the Black Obelisk has been dismissed as scholars see little evidence that Shalmaneser III pressed his claims of lordship. The focused text in the object follows:

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<sup>38</sup> See Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, 63.

(lines 97b-99a)

In my eighteenth palû, I crossed the Euphrates for the sixteenth time. *Hazael of Damascus attacked for battle*. I captured from him 1,121 chariots, 470 cavalries, and his camp as well.

(lines 102b-104a)

In my twenty-first palû, I crossed the Euphrates for the twenty-first time. I marched to the cities of *Hazael of Damascus*. I captured four cities and received tribute from the people of the lands of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos.

(The epigraph of the second relief on four sides)

*I received tribute from Jehu (Iaua), the Omrides: silver, gold, a gold bowl, a gold tureen, gold vessels, gold pails, tin, the staffs of the king's hand, and spears.*<sup>39</sup>

In this inscription, the campaign of Shalmaneser III in his eighteenth regnal year is briefly mentioned, emphasizing the information that Hazael of Damascus was the only enemy. In his twenty-first regnal year, Shalmaneser III again campaigned against Hazael and at that time, received tributes from Tyre, Sidon, and Babylos. This information is the only record about his campaign of the twenty-first regnal year, and the political situation of Syria-Palestine seems to remain similarly to previous accounts. These states gave up fighting against Assyria and tried to remain in a good relationship with Assyria.

According to other texts of the campaign in the eighteenth regnal year of Shalmaneser III's campaign, King Jehu presented tributes to Assyria. This account becomes a base to believe that the epigraph and the relief describe such an event in 841 BCE. For example, Albert Grayson believes that "the epigraph...concerns the receipt of tribute from Jehu,

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 67, 149. For the cuneiform of the Black Obelisk, see Edward Hawkins, *Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character from Assyrian Monuments* (London: Harrison and Son, 1951), 87–98.

king of Israel (“house of Omri”), in 841 BC (eighteenth regnal year), as recorded in the annals.”<sup>40</sup> The assumption is clearly related with the account of the III R 5, 6 and the Marble-Slab inscription.

Beside the long inscription of campaigns, the Black Obelisk chose five kings to portray in tributary scenes around the obelisk. The five reliefs are the most important visual source that Shalmaneser III vividly emphasized and had engraved on the full face of the obelisk. The question why those five kings were chosen to be in the obelisk is interesting and related to this paper. No one will believe that the five kings were randomly chosen. Some scholars suggest that the five reliefs represent the vassals chosen to demonstrate the geographical bounds that Shalmaneser III claimed to have taken, from west to east. For example, in the article, “Remarks about Some Assyrian Reliefs,” E. Porada seeks the meaning of the first two reliefs (Sua of the land of Gilzanu and Jehu of Israel) and states that the two reliefs show that “the gigantic extent of the areas covered by Shalmaneser’s campaigns and of his sphere of influence is effectively demonstrated.”<sup>41</sup> Porada believes that indicating the famous points or names far from each other would be a common tactic in historical inscriptions. Moreover, in her article, “Geography as an Organizing Principle in the Imperial Art of Shalmaneser III,” Michelle Marcus argues that this view “can be expanded so that all five bands are taken into account.”<sup>42</sup> She insists that Gilzanu and Israel were selected not only because they were

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<sup>40</sup> Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, 149.

<sup>41</sup> E. Porada, “Remarks about Some Assyrian Reliefs,” *AS* 33 (1983): 15.

<sup>42</sup> Michelle Marcus, “Geography as an Organizing Principle in the Imperial Art of Shalmaneser III,” *IRAQ* 49 (1987): 88.



the farthest east and west that Shalmaneser III had advanced but also because they had serious economic commercial values. Referring to the study of H. Tadmor, who insists that the annals of Shalmaneser III are mainly concerned with “economic and material gains” as the inscriptions show the numbers of cities conquered as well as quantities of resources and commodities received as tribute, Marcus argues that Gilzanu and Israel willingly made a special relationship with Assyria.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, she asserts that “Jehu’s submission must have been a particularly powerful symbol of Assyrian control in the west” because it proves that Shalmaneser III achieved commercial network connection to the extensive territory of Hamath in central Syria.<sup>44</sup> This includes a trade route running through central Syria up to Asia Minor, as well as the maritime trade across the Mediterranean Sea. Marcus argues that the whole obelisk, including the other three imageries, may be read as a “statement of the expansion of Assyria’s commercial network under Shalmaneser, and of the maintenance of economic prosperity through access to a wide range of foreign raw materials and goods.”<sup>45</sup>

By submitting tribute, Jehu obtained a promise of protecting northern Israel from Assyria. As already indicated in Marcus’s argument, Jehu and Sua of Gilzanu willingly submitted to place their states under the special protection of Shalmaneser III. Scholars

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 88–89; Hayim Tadmor, “Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and Its Aftermath,” in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*, ed. H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 36–40.

<sup>44</sup> Marcus, “Geography as an Organizing Principle in the Imperial Art of Shalmaneser III,” 88.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 89.

such as Elat and Kuan also point out that the scepter handed to Shalmaneser III in the reliefs indicates that Jehu's submission is indeed of his own will and it is a "peaceful submission."<sup>46</sup> In his article, "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III against Aram and Israel," Moshe Elat argues that "handing over the *huṭartu* to Shalmaneser III, Jehu and Sua, king of Gilzanu, both wished to symbolize that their kingdoms had been handed over to the protection of the king of Assyria."<sup>47</sup> Elat believes that the word, *huṭartu*, is used for a slave mark to designate a specific owner in the late Babylonian period as well as the Neo-Assyrian period. Therefore, the scepter symbolizes the customary action to which that both Jehu and Sua submit and ask for a special relationship with Assyria. Kuan also agrees with Elat that the phrase, <sup>GIŠ</sup>*hutartu ša qat šarri*, indicates that Jehu's submission is a political gesture. Kuan believes that the reliefs represent the submission of the five kings from five different geographical regions and it occurs at "different periods during the reign of Shalmaneser."<sup>48</sup> According to Kuan, Israel-Assyrian relations during the reign of Jehu is obviously revealed through the Black Obelisk, as the payment of tribute on the relief indicates that Jehu purchased the right to rule over Israel with an Assyrian sanction of his rule in 841-840 BCE. From Jehu's submission, the pro-Assyrian policy was established for the first time in Israel.

A closer analysis of Jehu's submission reveals important information. During the reign of the dynasty of Omri, the anti-Assyrian policy was in effect and the coalition of

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<sup>46</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 65.

<sup>47</sup> Moshe Elat, "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III against Aram and Israel," *IEJ* 25, no. 1 (1975): 34.

<sup>48</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 64.

Syria-Palestine states was strong enough that the army of Shalmaneser III had to struggle against the Aramean coalition. Elat argues that Shalmaneser III's inscriptions provide "an explanation of his failure at the battle of Qarqar in the sixth year of his reign and the subsequent failure of campaigns conducted in his tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth years."<sup>49</sup> However, the campaigns of Shalmaneser III were still considerable. After long battles between the Syria-Palestine coalition and Assyria, the coalition collapsed, and the only army left standing against Assyria was Aram-Damascus. Jehu's submission was remarkably important to change the political situation in this area. Continuing battles with Aram-Damascus hindered the great plan of Shalmaneser III for the whole economic and commercial network, but Jehu's submission to Assyria and continued cooperation ensured successful achievements for Shalmaneser III. Jehu was able to make a new relationship with Assyria and received military support from Shalmaneser III as well as sanction for his personal coup. Shalmaneser III chose Jehu and Sua of Gilzanu and had them engraved in the reliefs, two of five significant relationships, because their submission made the plan for an economic network possible to accomplish. Unfortunately, most interpreters consider Jehu's submission to Shalmaneser III to be a mere tribute without any lasting consequence. Sweeney disagrees with this view because Jehu's relationship with Assyria provides "the foundation by which Israel ultimately overcomes its Aramean opponents."<sup>50</sup> Sweeney's view is right because the Assyrian materials above provide evidence that Jehu's political agenda fits with what Assyria intends. When Aram's military focus was to defend their north border against Assyria,

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<sup>49</sup> Elat, "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III against Aram and Israel," 35.

<sup>50</sup> Sweeney, "The Portrayal of Assyria in the Book of Kings," 278.

Israel was able to flourish. Since the obelisk was erected in the late period of the rule of Shalmaneser III, we can assume that the vassal relationship between Shalmaneser III and Jehu continued. In fact, Jehoash (Joash) ben Jehoahaz of Israel (801-786 BCE) defeated the Arameans during the period, and his son, Jeroboam ben Jehoash (786-746 BCE) was able to have a peaceful and prosperous Israelite Kingdom, expanding its border as large as that of Solomon (See below).

### 3.2.2. Analysis of Assyrian inscriptions of Adad Nirari III

Adad Nirari III (810-783 BCE) succeeded to the throne of Šamši-Adad V who ruled 823-811 BCE after Shalmaneser III. There are very few inscriptions for Šamši-Adad V but the eponym chronicle indicates that he did not proceed with any campaign toward the west during his reign.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, during the period of Šamši-Adad V's reign, some rulers of Syria-Palestine rebelled and did not offer tribute to Assyria. According to Kuan, this is a period when Hazael of Aram-Damascus expanded his territory as indicated in the biblical text. The strong power of Hazael subjugated Israel, Philistia, and Judah as well. 2 Kgs 10:32–33 and 12:17–18 state:

In those days the LORD began to trim off parts of Israel. Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the Wadi Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan. (2 Kgs 10:32–33)

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<sup>51</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 69–70; J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 3 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 26–27.

At that time King Hazael of Aram went up, fought against Gath, and took it. But when Hazael set his face to go up against Jerusalem, King Jehoash of Judah took all the votive gifts that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his ancestors, the kings of Judah, had dedicated, as well as his own votive gifts, all the gold that was found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent these to King Hazael of Aram. Then Hazael withdrew from Jerusalem. (2 Kgs 12:17–18)

According to these reports, it is assumed that Hazael's empire was strong enough to expand its territory and practiced such a power as to dominate smaller countries in this area. The absence of Assyrian power during this period offers a suitable chance for Hazael's military power to flourish.

Similarly, in his book, *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200-539 B.C.E.*, Lawrence Mykytiuk states that the Assyrian and Aramaean inscriptions report that Hazael and his kingdom had a strong military power. Mykytiuk argues that the Aramaic inscriptions such as the Melqart stele and two bronze matching horse blinders (Eretria Museum No. B273 and National Archaeological Museum No. 15070) indicate Hazael's achievement of his military expansion northward. Mykytiuk believes that Hazael was able to take advantage of "the fact that in the later years of the reign of Shalmaneser III, Assyrian military campaigns in Syria-Palestine were largely curtailed."<sup>52</sup> Mykytiuk believes that in the eighteenth regnal year of Shalmaneser III, inscriptions show the breakup of the Aramean coalition as they indicate

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<sup>52</sup> Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Inscriptions of 1200-539 B.C.E.* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 119.

the opposition between the kingdoms of Damascus and Israel: Jehu of Israel paid tribute to Assyria while Hazael had fought against Assyria.

During the reign of Jehu, the power of Hazael threatened the throne of Israel as indicated in 2 Kgs 10:32–33. Even though Israel and Aram were in a coalition together under the dynasty of Omri, Jehu's submission to Assyria changed whole political landscape, and Hazael began to wield his military force against the neighboring nations; it can be assumed that Hazael's betrayal also created the political change. Adad Nirari III is the next successor who ruled 810-783 BCE. Following Adad Nirari III's accession, Assyrian campaigns toward the west resumed again.

#### 3.2.2.1. The Rimah Stele of Adad Nirari III

The Rimah Stele of Adad Nirari III is an inscription found in 1967 at Tell al Rimah, identified with the site of ancient Qatara in the Sinjar region, west of Mosul/Nineveh. The inscription contains twenty-one lines on the image of the king, and nine lines were erased in antiquity, so there are some difficulties to figure the text out. Unfortunately, no historical records of Adad Nirari III are classified as annals because they are much shorter than any edition of the royal annals. Therefore, scholars such as Eberhard Schrader categorize it as “summary inscriptions.”<sup>53</sup> The original text of the Rimah Stele with a transliteration of the inscription was first published by Stephanie Page

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<sup>53</sup> Eberhard Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften Und Das Alte Testament* (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1872), 135.

in her article, “A Stela of Adad Nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah.”<sup>54</sup> For our present purpose, the inscription is historically significant for three reasons: First, it includes an account of tribute taken from various kings, including the king of Aram-Damascus as well as Ia’asu (Joash) of Samaria. Second, it provides for the earliest known cuneiform reference of Samaria. Third, it provides information about the continuing political relationship between Israel and Assyria. Unfortunately, the Rimah Stele of Adad Nirari III and its presentation in relation to Joash of Israel is largely ignored. For example, *The Cambridge Ancient History* on this material and period very briefly mentions the list of states which paid “homage in Damascus...[to] their new overlord,” Adad Nirari.<sup>55</sup> However, the inscription is very important to understand that Israel after Jehu continued the previous relationship that Jehu had made. The pro-Assyrian policy is proven in the political situation in the text following. Adad Nirari III resubjugated all the state that had rebelled against Assyria and received tributes from them. The inscription of the Rimah stela reports his military campaign. Throughout the brief presentation of the achievements of Adad Nirari III, the lines 6b-9a of the inscription names four states that paid tribute to Adad Nirari III.

(6b-9a)

I imposed tribute and regular tax for future days upon them. He received two thousand talents of silver, one thousand talents of copper, two thousand talents of iron, three thousand multicolored garments and linen garments as tribute from

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<sup>54</sup> Stephanie Page, “A Stela of Adad Nirari III and Nergal-Ereš from Tell Al Rimah,” *IRAQ* 30, no. 2 (1968): 141–43.

<sup>55</sup> Bury, Cook, and Adcock, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3:23–26, 28–29.

Mari' of the land Damascus. *He received the tribute (ma-da-tu) of Ia'asu (Joash), the Samaritan, of the Tyrians and of the Sidonians.*<sup>56</sup>

The list of tribute in the text consists of *Mari'* of Damascus, *Ia'asu* of Samaria, Tyre, and Sidon. According to Page, the name *Ia'asu* has to be the name of "Jehoash rather than his father Jehoahaz because Hebrew *š* changes to Akkadian *s*, whereas *z* does not change."<sup>57</sup> Moreover, during Tiglath-Pileser III's reign, the name of King Jehoahaz of Judah was *Ia-u-ha-zi* in Akkadian. Therefore, it is more convincing that *Ia'asu* in this text names Joash, which is an abbreviated form of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz.

Joash ruled Israel for 801-786 BCE. According to Page, Assyrian campaigns to the Levant were performed three times, in 806, 802, and 798 or later BCE.<sup>58</sup> Adad Nirari III received tribute from Joash of Israel in 798 BCE. Mari' of Aram-Damascus was a powerful rebel against Assyria as he proved his power in the expansion of his own land. Thus, the Tell Rimah inscription lists the quantities of tribute in detail in order to boast

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<sup>56</sup> Page, "A Stela of Adad Nirari III and Nergal-Ereš from Tell Al Rimah," 143. Page points out that the amount of tribute paid by Mari' are all different in the three sources. For more study, see *ibid.*, 144 n6-7. Hayim Tadmor also argues that the different quantities of metals received from the king of Damascus in the Rimah Stele, the Calah Slab, and the Saba'a stele do not mean that there were three different occasions to take tribute. Cf. Hayim Tadmor, "The Historical Inscriptions of Adad Nirari III," *IRAQ* 35, no. 2 (1973): 144.

<sup>57</sup> Page, "A Stela of Adad Nirari III and Nergal-Ereš from Tell Al Rimah," 144.

<sup>58</sup> Other scholars such as Tadmor, Miller, and Pitard insist that 796 BCE was when Adad Nirari performed his military campaign to the west and Joash of Israel along with the Phoenician states offered tribute to Adad Nirari III. See Tadmor, "The Historical Inscriptions of Adad Nirari III," 146–48; Wayne Pitard, *Ancient Damascus: A Historical Study of the Syrian City-State from Earliest Times Until Its Fall to the Assyrians in 732 B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 164–65; J. Maxwell Miller and John Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah, Second Edition*, 2nd edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 295–96.



his achievement while other records are brief. The text indicates that tributes from other states resumed or performed tribute continually to Assyria. Israel's pro-Assyrian policy obviously appears in the inscription as the house of Jehu continues the relationship with Assyria, the military protector of Israel. The vassal list of Adad Nirari III clearly supports the political relationship.

#### 3.2.2.2. The Calah Slab

The Calah Slab is an inscription of Adad Nirari III found by Loftus at Nimrud in 1854. It is a broken upper part of a large stone slab and contains a prologue and historical narrative. Like the Rimah Stele, it is normally categorized as a summary inscription since it is not under the category of annals of kings. The text has 24 lines and my focus on this paper is lines 10b through 21, following:

From the banks of the Euphrates, the lands of Hitti, Amurru in its full extent, *Tyre, Sidon, Israel (Hu-um-ri), Edom, Palestine*, as far as the shore of the great sea of the rising Sun, I made them submit to my feet, imposing upon them tribute. I marched against the land Damascus: I shut up Mari' king of Damascus in Damascus, his royal residence...he seized my feet, assuming the position of a slave. I received his palace in Damascus, his royal residence, 2,300 talents of silver, 20 talents of gold, 5,000 talents of iron, linen garments with multicolored garments, a bed with ivory, a couch mounted and inlaid with ivory, and countless others of his possessions.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, 281–282.

This inscription, as indicated as a summary inscription, lists Adad Nirari III's achievements in the west. Adad Nirari III received tribute from the Hittites and Amurru, which refer to the Neo-Hittite states in Anatolia and northern Syria as well as central Syria. Tyre, Sidon, Israel, Edom, and Philistia were also states which paid tribute to Adad Nirari III. The Calah Slab again in the same way of the Rimah Stele presents a little more detailed account of the campaign against Mari' King of Damascus. Even though there is no indication when the campaign against Aram-Damascus happened, it is clear that this inscription, along with the Rimah Stele, focuses on the event about Aram-Damascus. Clearly, Aram-Damascus was a strong resistance to Adad Nirari, and Assyria's domination should be recorded as a big achievement. For the other states, Kuan suggests from the Calah Slab that the homage to the Assyrian king was apparently voluntarily offered.<sup>60</sup>

As I noted above, the predecessor of Adad Nirari III, Šamši-Adad V, had a weak concern about taking care of the Syria-Palestine area, and thus Aram-Damascus under the reign of Hazael underwent a period of expansion. Kuan argues that the activity of expansion to the north appears in the event that "Bar-Hadad, son of Hazael, joined with Arpad to lead a coalition of north Syrian and Anatolian states against Zakkur of Hamath and Lu'aš, who had remained loyal to Assyria."<sup>61</sup> When he succeeded the throne in 805 BCE, Adad Nirari III crossed the Euphrates with his army in his sixth regnal year to fight against Arpad after Nisan 805 BCE and it took 2 years. Moreover, based on the Calah

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<sup>60</sup> Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 83.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

Slab, Kuan argues that Israel, Tyre, Sidon, Edom, and Philistia were “under the domination of Aram-Damascus prior to the death of Hazael (probably in 806 BCE).” Kuan believes that the account from 2 Kgs 10:32–33 (as we discussed in the Rimah Stele) supports the subjugation of Israel to Aram-Damascus. The loss of Israel’s territory during the last time of Jehu continued until Jehoahaz. In Nisan 803 BCE, when Adad Nirari III began a battle against Damascus, Kuan asserts that Joash of Israel delivered his tribute to Adad Nirari III when the Assyrian army was in southern Syria during the first regnal year of Joash (804-803 BCE).

In support of Assyria and its military attack to Aram-Damascus, Joash of Israel again retook old Israelite territories lost to Aram-Damascus as in 2 Kgs 13:25: “Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz took again from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns that he had taken from his father Jehoahaz in war. Three times Joash defeated him and recovered the towns of Israel.” Thus, Israel, during these political relations, stands against Aram-Damascus and continues pro-Assyrian policy. 2 Kgs 13:5 states that “Therefore the LORD gave Israel a savior, so that they escaped from the hand of the Arameans; and the people of Israel lived in their homes as formerly.” The savior in this context would be Adad Nirari III.

### 3.3. Concluding Remarks

The foregoing analysis based on the Ancient Near Eastern materials in relation to Shalmaneser III and Adad Nirari III provides the possible background of the relationship

between Israel and Assyria. Based on the evidence that I discussed above, we can assume that during the reign of Omri, the cooperation among the states of Syria-Palestine was at its height. The dynamics of the vassal relationship between states were complex and showed an obligation that Israel must follow, due to its lack of military power or against the rising power of Aram-Damascus.

During the reign of Shalmaneser III, the military expansion project of Assyria influenced most smaller states in the Syria-Palestine area. The Kurkh Monolith proves that there was no possibility to assume any coalition among the states, but the force of Shalmaneser III created a new political era that during the reign of King Ahab. Aram-Damascus and northern Israel, along with other states, had a strong anti-Assyrian policy. The Baghdad Text supports the conclusion that not only was the Aramean coalition strong enough to defend their territories against the force of Assyria, but also northern Israel continually participated in this coalition during the reigns of Ahaziah and Joram, who were sons of Ahab. In other words, the relationship between Aram and northern Israel was cooperative until new political power games began. The III R 5, 6 hints that the coalition was dispersed and indicates that some states began to submit and pay tribute to Assyria. In particular, King Jehu, who overthrew the house of Omri, changed the former political policy to a pro-Assyrian policy as a military strategy. The Marble-Slab Inscription also consists of the same campaign of Shalmaneser III in his eighteenth *palû* and again supports this political move. Finally, the Black Obelisk depicts King Jehu, the founder of the Jehu dynasty, bowing at the feet of Shalmaneser III in submission, and provides information on how King Jehu obtained a promise of protecting northern Israel

from Shalmaneser III. The Black Obelisk also confirms that this political relationship between northern Israel and Assyria continued throughout the reign of Shalmaneser III.

Next, during the reign of Adad Nirari III, Assyria again managed political relationships with the states in the west because his predecessor, Šamši-Adad V, could not control his former vassals. Some states even rebelled and withheld their tributes, refusing to submit to Assyria. The Rimah Stele indicates that Adad Nirari III campaigned to the Syria-Palestine area and received tributes from Mari' of Damascus, Joash of Israel, the Tyrians, and the Sidonians. As indicated in the Rimah Stele, Mari' of Damascus was a strong opponent against Assyria and subjugated northern Israel during the time of political neglect under Šamši-Adad V. The biblical text, 2 Kgs 10:32–33, records the loss of Israel's territories in this period. Joash of Israel continued the pro-Assyrian policy and submitted tribute to Assyria. Accordingly, the Calah Slab supports the campaigns of Adad Nirari III and states that he received tribute from the Hittites, Amurru, Syria, Tyre, Sidon, Israel, Edom, and Philistia. In particular, Adad Nirari III broke the rising power of Aram-Damascus and gave power to Israel so that Joash of Israel again retook old Israelite territories. In sum, the Ancient Near Eastern materials clearly show the political change and the context of Israel's social-political background during the reign of the house of Omri and Jehu.

I argue that the vassal treaty relationship made by Jehu (842-815 BCE) is the main problem about which Hosea strongly complains. As I discussed in the Kurkh Monolith and the Baghdad Text, northern Israel under King Omri strongly supported anti-Assyrian policy. As III R 5, 6, the Marble-Slab Inscription, and the Black Obelisk

indicate, Jehu then overturned the anti-Assyrian foreign policy and employed pro-Assyrian policy in order to maintain northern Israel's strength among the states in the Syria-Palestine area, especially against Aram-Damascus. As we saw in the Rimah Stele and the Calah Slab, the pro-Assyrian policy was maintained throughout the Jehu dynasty which includes Jehoahaz (815-801 BCE), Jehoash (Joash, 801-786 BCE), Jeroboam II (786-746 BCE), and Zechariah (746 BCE).

In terms of the biblical text, it is noteworthy that Hosea's prophecy begins with the childbirth narratives in which the first son is named Jezreel, the site where Jehu overthrew the house of Omri and founded his own dynasty. The biblical texts clearly indicate that King Jehu killed Joram, the Omride (2 Kgs 9:16–26) at Jezreel. King Jehu proclaims that “the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel” (2 Kgs 9:10a) and “the corpse of Jezebel shall be like dung on the field in the territory of Jezreel” (2 Kgs 9:37a). Hosea's political viewpoint against Assyria remained unabated. The references to Israel's relationship with Assyria and its ally Egypt throughout the book speak for Hosea's unchanging thought. For example, in Hos 5:13, the prophet Hosea states that “When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.” Hosea believes that Ephraim's turn to Assyria for aid is unsuccessful. In Hos 7:8–10, Hosea accuses Ephraim's wrong behaviors as well as arrogance in not seeking God's help. In Hos 8:9, Hosea states, “For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild ass wandering alone; Ephraim has bargained for lovers.” In Hosea's eyes, northern Israel and its fault in seeking aid from Assyria is very problematic. In Hos 9:3, the prophet accuses Israel, saying that “they shall not remain in the land of the LORD; but Ephraim shall return to

Egypt, and in Assyria they shall eat unclean food.” Hosea continues to accuse the people in Israel in Hos 10:5–6, “the inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven. Its people shall mourn for it, and its idolatrous priests shall wail over it, over its glory that has departed from it. The thing itself shall be carried to Assyria as tribute to the great king. Ephraim shall be put to shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his idol.” In Hos 10:14, Hosea refers to the defeat at Beth Arbel by Shalman, “therefore the tumult of war shall rise against your people, and all your fortresses shall be destroyed, as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle when mothers were dashed in pieces with their children.” In Hos 11:5, Hosea asserts that “They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me.” In Hos 11:11, however, YHWH wants to save the people, and “They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.” In Hos 12:2 [12:1], the prophet deplores that “Ephraim herds the wind, and pursues the east wind all day long; they multiply falsehood and violence; they make a treaty with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt.” In Hos 14:4 [14:3], Hosea argues that “Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; we will say no more, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our hands. In you the orphan finds mercy.”

What does it mean that Hosea is concerned with the house of Jehu while living during the reign of Jeroboam ben Joash? He was the fourth monarch of the Jehu line, whose own son and successor, Zechariah, was assassinated only six months into his reign. My conclusion, then, is that Hosea is certainly insisting that the alliance between the Jehu dynasty and Assyria (and Egypt) is problematic. Hosea’s political points are corroborated

by the historical documents which clarify Hosea's objection to Israel's alliance with Assyria.



## CHAPTER FOUR: MARRIAGE MOTIF IN POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS AND TREATIES

### 4.1. Introduction

Having just argued that Ancient Near Eastern materials have revealed Israel's political relationship with other countries, and that Israel made a vassal relationship with Assyria beginning from the submission of King Jehu at the feet of Shalmaneser III and continuing through the reign of Adad Nirari III, let us now turn our attention to the content of the Book of Hosea. By using the form critical method, I want now to analyze the marriage motif in Hos 1–3 in relation to the political relationships and treaties. My goal is to show how Hosea's political agenda is also reflected in the marriage metaphor (Hos 1–3). Scholars generally posit that Hos 1–3 is a metaphorical representation of Israel's sinful behavior, accusing them of religious apostasy against YHWH as well as the promise of restoration for the people of YHWH. However, Hosea prefers to express his political viewpoint rhetorically in his use of the marriage motif, which is repeatedly employed throughout the history of ancient literature in terms of covenants and treaties.

#### *Marriage Motif vs Marriage Metaphor*

To begin with the analysis of the marriage metaphor in Hos 1–3, the definition of the terms has to be set. I use both terms, “marriage motif” as well as “marriage metaphor,” because the term “motif” literally means “a recurring subject, theme, or idea” but the term “metaphor” means “a figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another”<sup>1</sup> They are different in the sense that a motif

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<sup>1</sup> Janet M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 15.

may continue to deliver the same subject or idea throughout history, but a metaphor possibly changes its meaning within broader contexts. Since I argue that the marriage concept is a recurring theme or idea from the ancient literary world to present a relationship between two subjects, whether it is a husband-wife relationship, sovereign-vassal relationship, or any other, the “marriage motif” behind a text is also literary working device, while the “marriage metaphor” suggests limited connotation in this sense. I argue that the marriage motif (imagery/language) in the ancient world was a literary device that repeatedly appeared in political relationships and treaties. Therefore, the “marriage motif” in the text is also an important application in the discussion. I will analyze both marriage metaphor and marriage motif in different layers.

First of all, the term “marriage metaphor” is used to explain that characters in the metaphor are used to suggest a certain meaning or concept of expression. Another aspect of the metaphor is its flexibility. In his book, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, I. Richards demonstrates how metaphor works. He explains that a metaphor involves two different things: the “tenor” of metaphor (that is, its underlying subject) and the “vehicle” (the mode in which it is expressed).<sup>2</sup> His divisions show the two different working areas of thought behind a metaphor. In general, different people may interpret the tenor and vehicle of a metaphor differently, creating multiple interpretations. In other words, can we say that the interpretations of the tenor and vehicle of a metaphor always result the same understanding? Another scholar, J. Andrew Dearman, who analyzes the concept of metaphor in biblical literature, asserts that while vehicles and tenors are particular, they

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<sup>2</sup> I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 102.

are not immutable or comprehensive.<sup>3</sup> For example, in Hos 13:3, the vehicle of “dew” is used to speak of the negative tenor of Israel’s temporary status. However, in Hos 14:6, the vehicle of “dew” is used to speak of the positive tenor of God’s kindness toward Israel.

The interpretation of the metaphor possibly changes its nuanced meanings based on the variety of viewpoints, settings, cultures, and customs of each reader/audience. In contrast, the marriage motif differs from the marriage metaphor as the metaphor conveys a meaning or implication based on the context in the text. When the marriage motif is used to represent a relationship between two entities, there is a tradition that recurs throughout literary history. Therefore, since a metaphor is interpreted and valued by a reader’s own perception which results in various different outcomes, I would like to propose that the marriage motif is also another important interpretive rhetorical layer in Hos 1–3.

Nevertheless, Hosea’s marriage imagery is predominantly defined as a metaphor since many scholars generally insist that the message of Hosea’s marriage and his family organization reflects YHWH’s message to the Israelites concerning their sinful apostasy against YHWH by using metaphorical representation of Hosea’s family life.<sup>4</sup> This limited understanding of the marriage imagery could result in scholars, setting limits to the religious reading of Hosea 1–3 and even the book as a whole.

#### *Hosea 1–3 as a marriage metaphor*

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<sup>3</sup> Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 356.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of scholarly understanding as a metaphor, see the following section of this chapter, 4.2. “A Brief History of Scholarship on Hos 1–3.”

As discussed in chapter two, the marriage metaphor (or sign-act as referred by some other scholars)<sup>5</sup> is clearly in the focus of much scholarship of the Book of Hosea. A number of scholars have recently suggested that the marriage metaphor in Hos 1–3 is the most important and overarching literary device, indicating Israel’s apostasy against YHWH, and that this metaphor overwhelms the entire theme of the Book of Hosea, pointing out the religious apostasy as the main target of Hosea’s criticism. For example, according to Kelle, the twentieth-century scholarly interpretation of Hosea 1–3 shares several points of consensus, such as thinking that Hos 1–3 are the main chapters of the book. Kelle’s summary of the scholarly consensus is that

- 1) the prophet Hosea lived in northern Israel between 750 and 725 BCE;
- 2) the texts contain original Hosean preaching as well as additional elements from Judean, exilic, and post-exilic redactors;
- 3) the primary concern of the book is Israel’s apostasy through the abandonment or confusion of Yahweh for/with Baal;
- 4) The book shows Hosea’s use of Pentateuchal materials and earlier traditions, such as Jacob and the Sinai covenant, as well as later books, such as Jeremiah and Deuteronomy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, there are at least thirty examples of Sign-Acts; some scholars insist that there are over forty instances of Sign-Acts. See David Stacey, *Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1990), 3; Ake Viberg, *Prophets in Action: An Analysis of Prophetic Symbolic Acts in the Old Testament*, Coniectanea Biblica 55 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2007), 44–45. See Georg Fohrer, *Die Gattung Der Berichte über Symbolische Handlungen Der Propheten*, BZAW 99 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), 94; Werner H. Schmidt, *Old Testament Introduction* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 181. According to Fohrer, narratives of Sign-Acts have three elements: (1) divine instructions to perform some deed; (2) the prophet’s execution of God’s commands; and (3) an explanation of the significance of the action. The command to perform a Sign-Act, a report on its execution, and an interpretation of it are important but some elements of the Sign-Acts appear in varied forms.

<sup>6</sup> Kelle, “Hosea 1-3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship,” 181–82. For the overall history of the interpretation of the Book of Hosea, see Harold Rowley, “The Marriage of Hosea,” in *Men of God: Studies in Old Testament History and Prophecy* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963), 66–97; Ronald E. Clements, “Understanding the Book of Hosea,” *RevExp* 72, no. 4 (1975): 405–23; Bernard Renaud, “Osée 1-3: Analyse

This scholarly consensus is deserving of further analysis and will be discussed in this study as these points need to be elaborated with my argument, but the most problematic point in the consensus is the view that the main concern of Hosea is to accuse Israel's apostasy of following Baal through the abandonment of Yahweh. In this regard, Kelle demonstrates that "the referents, meanings, and functions of the metaphors of fornication and adultery" provide a basis of "their possible connections to worship in a Baalistic cult, sexual activity within fertility rites, or other socio-political contexts"<sup>7</sup> In other words, scholars believe that the text implies the sexualized Baal cult in eighth-century Israel, and they try to identify comparative Ancient Near Eastern traditions or materials that represent any connections with Hosea's marriage image and sexual language in the metaphor.

It is right that religious apostasy is one of the important themes of the marriage metaphor and throughout the book, the accusation of such corruption frequently appears as Hosea condemns not only the priests (Hos 4:6, 9; 5:1; 6:9; 10:5) and prophets (Hos 4:5; 9:7–8) for their failure to inculcate proper knowledge of YHWH in the people, but also Israel's cultic sites (Gilgal, Beth-Aven, Mizpah, Schechem, etc) for improper worship of pagan deities. Although I agree with such religious reading of the text up to a point in that Hosea obviously was heavily involved in the debate over Israel's future, as he was

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Diachronique et Lecture Synchronique: Problèmes de Méthode," *RevScRel* 57, no. 4 (1983): 249–60; C. Seow, "Hosea, Book of," in *ABD*, Vol. 3 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1992), 291–97; Graham I. Davies, *Hosea* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Yvonne Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective*, JSOTSup 212 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Brad Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Kelle, "Hosea 1-3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship," 182.

looking at some of the corruptions in the social setting and community, I cannot accept the view that the marriage metaphor in Hosea refers strictly to religious issues, especially as insisted by Hans Wolff, charging that Israel abandoned YHWH to pursue Canaanite cult and way of life.<sup>8</sup> However, in my opinion, prophecy did not present one consistent religious or theological position, but many positions as prophets actively engaged with their world. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Wolff overlooks what I consider an important point about Hosea's political agenda, and this is deeply engaged in the marriage motif -- or let us say, marriage/love language in political background. Can we assert that the book is only concerned with religious issues? Is there another way to read the text concerning the political and religious dimensions together?

Among the many voices in the interpretive conversation about the marriage motif that will be outlined in the following pages, one perspective has been largely ignored. That is the fact that marriage family traditions in the ancient world frequently point to political relationships and treaties. Scholars suggest that there are connections between marriage family traditions and political relationships.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the analysis of the relationship between these traditions offers a unique way of thinking about how the words and marriage motif in Hos 1–3 may have functioned in the service of a larger concern of Hosea's project.

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<sup>8</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, 13–23.

<sup>9</sup> Scholarly discussion about the relationship between marriage/family tradition and political treaties follows in the section, “4.2.2. Political readings of the marriage motif.”

I argue that Hos 1–3 consists of language that alludes to the political setting or background of the prophet’s time. As we have discussed, Assyrian materials prove that there was a clear vassal relationship between Israel and Assyria. Both countries found their political and economic relationship beneficial. Hosea clearly presents his concerns with Assyria and the house of Jehu. Can we say that the book is concerned only with religious issues and not political issues? Under this circumstance, each chapter of Hos 1–3 not only insists the prophet’s political viewpoint with criticism, but also insists immediate dismissal of false leadership which maintains false political relationships.

#### 4.2. A Brief History of Scholarship on Hos 1–3

##### 4.2.1. Religious readings of the marriage metaphor

##### 4.2.1.1. William Harper, 1905

In his commentary, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, William Harper, reading the marriage metaphor as a plain symbol of religious apostasy, understands that Hosea was called for the prophetic work, and the first mission was to preach about the unfaithfulness of his wife, Gomer, in relation to a current status of Israel’s relationship to God.<sup>10</sup> According to Harper, the prophet represents YHWH, and Gomer, who is married to the prophet, is Israel. Finally, as Gomer goes astray in her marriage, Israel is also following other gods. Harper believes that Hosea’s marriage is closely related with the Baal fertility cult. It is due to the fact that Israel’s religious

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<sup>10</sup> William Harper, *A Critical-Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1905).

thought and tradition were endangered by the contact with “Baalism as a rival religion,” and Hosea’s prophecy is deeply rooted with this social and religious problem as apostasy toward YHWH.<sup>11</sup> The corruption of Israel’s religious activity was emphasized as the book’s background. Hosea is accusing that Israelites are “adopting the customs of the Canaanitish cult in their worship of YHWH.”<sup>12</sup>

Harper suggests that Hosea works from 743 BCE before the fall of Jehu’s house as indicated in the threat concerning Jezreel in Hos 1:4 to 734 BCE before the Syro-Ephraimite war of Pekah and Rezin against Judah has begun.<sup>13</sup> During this time, for Harper, Hosea’s message simply argues that 1) Israel is wicked and her condition morally is that of rottenness. 2) Israel’s political situation is doomed. 3) YHWH loves Israel, but Israel fails to comprehend YHWH and does not know him. 4) Israel deceives herself in her acts of repentance which results in her total destruction.<sup>14</sup> According to Harper, Hosea accuses the people of ignorance about knowing YHWH as Hosea appeals in Hos 2:8; 4:1, 6; 5:4; and 6:8. To know YHWH means not only knowledge of YHWH but also “practical application which knowledge calls for.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, the book of Hosea and his message is thereby a religious appeal to the Israelites. However, Harper is cautious when he considers the teaching of Israel’s restoration in the text as non-Hoseanic thought. In Hosea’s view, Israel is not a state or a government, but a family member, like a child or a

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., lxxxviii.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., cxi–cxlvi.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., cxlvi–cxlvii.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., cl.



wife. Such attitude can be easily found in the text. Therefore, Harper believes that Hosea's emphasis is placed upon his personal element and this view leads him to strongly oppose the "Canaanitish worship of the Baalism."<sup>16</sup> Harper emphasizes that looking at the immorality of Israel, the marriage metaphor fundamentally delivers Hosea's personal religious belief and affection toward the Israelites while at the same time strongly accuses them of religious apostasy.

#### 4.2.1.2. Hans W. Wolff, 1965

The work of Hans W. Wolff on Hosea overwhelmingly influenced scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century. His commentary was originally published in 1965 in German and translated into English in the Hermeneia series in 1974. In his commentary, Wolff strongly posits that the marriage metaphor in Hosea refers strictly to religious issues. Wolff claims that the metaphor in Hos 1–3 is *memorabilia*, which is a narrative that tells of a historical event with an accompanying interpretation.<sup>17</sup> Tracking such an event, Wolff analyzes the text based on the redactional and form-critical methods and argues that Hosea uses a legal genre which possibly came from the institutional setting similar to the law court. Hosea polemically employs it to dispute Canaanite worship overflowing in the practice of Israel's religious acts.

Disagreeing with the interpretation that Gomer was a prostitute before or after her marriage to Hosea, Wolff attempts to regard Gomer as one of sacred prostitutes in the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., cli.

<sup>17</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, 10, 57.

Baal fertility cult. Wolff proposes that a woman of harlotries (אִשֵּׁת זְנוּנִים) in Hos 1:2 is a woman who has engaged in sacred “bridal rites of initiation then current in Israel.”<sup>18</sup> The children born to Hosea are described as children of “harlotries” because Gomer’s fertility was enabled through pagan rite.<sup>19</sup> Hosea uses mythical elements as a polemic against the Baal myth that portrays the Canaanite god as the storm and fertility god who provides Israel with “gifts from the arable land.”<sup>20</sup> Wolff asserts that the wife of YHWH is Israel, not a goddess; thus, “the legal categories of covenantal thought replace the mythico-cultic fertility concepts that are rooted in *ἱερός γάμος* (sacral marriage).”<sup>21</sup> He further states that a metaphorical-ritual explanation reads: “she was a young Israelite woman, ready for marriage, who had demonstrably taken part in the Canaanite bridal rite of initiation that had become customary.”<sup>22</sup> In this rite, Wolff argues, “women sat themselves down in the sacred groves and waited for strangers to come and have intercourse with them.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, he assumes that the language of imagery of marriage metaphor mirrors the religious ritual defloration in which every ordinary Israelite woman participated. Thus, Wolff’s point is that Gomer represents an average Israelite woman who engaged in this

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., xxvi.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>23</sup> Hans W. Wolff, *Confrontations with the Prophets* (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress Publishing, 1983), 23.

apostate practice, and her character is typical of Israel's.<sup>24</sup> However, for Hosea, this cultic rite is a significant abandonment of YHWH, seeking other gods for fertility.

Wolff also claims that there are several themes in the text. Hos 1–3 features the unfaithful wife. Hos 4–14 contains Hosea's oracles which can be divided into two subsections as Hos 4–11 and 12–14. Each of these blocks moves from accusation to threat and finally to deliverance.<sup>25</sup> For Wolff, these thematic groupings show that Hosea's words were carefully put together into the current form by a later editor who demonstrated his theological view, and such process was probably begun in Hosea's lifetime.<sup>26</sup> The marriage metaphor and its image are obviously interconnected with the sexual aspects of Baal worship. While observing the illicit behaviors, Hosea critically condemns such acts of idolatry as well as apostasy against YHWH.

#### 4.2.1.3. Edmond Jacob, 1965

In his book section, *Osée*, Edmond Jacob suggests that the historical setting of the prophet Hosea is in the period from the end of the reign of Jeroboam II to the outskirts of the fall of Samaria, about 752-725 BCE, when the sovereignty of the thrones of the kingdom of Israel is markedly in turmoil.<sup>27</sup> During that period, the Assyrian world power in the Middle East under King Tiglath-Pileser III was strong enough to execute his

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<sup>24</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, 14–15.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix–xxxii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxi.

<sup>27</sup> Jacob, Keller, and Amsler, *Osée, Joël, Amos, Abdias, Jonas*, 9.

military plan to subject the western small states to vassalage. Wrestling with the power of Assyrian army, the destruction of the kingdom of Israel finally presents itself. Jacob argues that witnessing all these political movements, the prophet sees the sign of the coming of God's judgment on Israel and Judah.<sup>28</sup> For him, the prophets work as "les interprètes et les acteurs de la politique de Dieu."<sup>29</sup>

Agreeing with Wolff, Jacob also argues that Hosea himself has written some particularly important words, the autobiographical narratives of Hosea, in the category of "memorabilia."<sup>30</sup> However, Jacob interprets that the composition of the announcement of judgment with the promises of salvation at the end was in the prophet's scheme. Therefore, Wolff's attempt to seek any connection with Deuteronomistic circle is unconvincing and Jacob states that "On peut donc conclure que lorsqu'il a passé en Juda, le livre d'Osee comportait déjà tous les éléments qui le constituent actuellement."<sup>31</sup> In other words, Jacob believes that the marriage metaphor reflects Hosea's biography, working as an instrument in Hosea's prophetic career. The metaphor contains Hosea's prophetic oracles in which, despite Israel's sinful behavior, the promise of restoration is given to the people who understand YHWH's judgment.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 13.

#### 4.2.1.4. Wilhelm Rudolph, 1966

In his book, *Hosea*, Wilhelm Rudolph agrees with Wolff about the basic interpretation of the ministry of Hosea, believing that Hosea is a northern prophet working in northern Israel because Hosea's preaching predominantly uses Ephraim, and he is precisely aware of the political and religious conditions of the northern kingdom.<sup>32</sup> For Rudolph, Hosea works from 750-722 BCE, supposing that many narrative characters are best explained during the time of the last King Hoshea (e. g. Hos 7:3–7; 8:1–13; 10:3, 5–8; 12:1; 13:1).<sup>33</sup> However, Rudolph opposes Wolff's understanding of the ritual defloration of the Israelite women as a fertility cult enculturated by Canaanite Baal worship. Rather, Rudolph argues that Hosea married neither a prostitute nor sexually flighty girl to deliver a metaphor reflecting Israel's shameful behavior to their God, but he failed in his first marriage, and this misfortune pointed in such a way that he must represent it to warn against the sinful behavior of the Israelites.<sup>34</sup> In other words, Hosea was already married before he began his prophetic work. Otherwise, he could not put his marriage in the service of his prophetic preaching, by giving his children unusual names that emphasize the failure of the Israelites.<sup>35</sup>

Rudolph argues that the marriage metaphor in Hos 1 was influenced and added later by the textual representation of the relationship between YHWH and Israel in Hos 2,

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<sup>32</sup> Rudolph, *Hosea*, 22–23.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

defending the historical Gomer as an innocent woman. For him, the subject of the sign-act in Hos 1 has to be the children's names, not Hosea's marriage itself. David Petersen also maintains that the marriage itself is not the message of the book of Hosea. He argues that the names given to the children are the core message that YHWH intends Hosea to convey to the people.<sup>36</sup> Rudolph's redactional approach to the marriage metaphor still emphasizes the metaphor of the children's names as a prophetic message toward the Israelites reading the metaphor as an admonition of their religious corruption.

#### 4.2.1.5. James Mays, 1969

In his book, *Hosea: A Commentary*, James Mays points out Hosea's understanding of YHWH as God of Israel and Israel as the people of YHWH through various articulated expressions of his faith.<sup>37</sup> Mays argues that the entire book of Hosea emphasizes and denounces the cult and mythology of the god Baal. Based on his interpretation, Mays believes that "Hosea's condemnation of Israel's commerce with Baal and of any syncretistic modification of Yahwism by the influence of Baalism is unyielding."<sup>38</sup> However, Hosea adopts the concepts of the fertility cult to describe the relationship between YHWH and the Israelite in order to educate and call for attention as well as repentance. Therefore, the contents of the book primarily emphasize religious restoration among the Israelites who sinned.

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<sup>36</sup> David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 178.

<sup>37</sup> Mays, *Hosea*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

For Mays, Hosea's metaphorical portrayal of the covenant in terms of the marriage metaphor is the most effective and influential way to persuade his audience, and Hosea's continuous use of comparisons and images effectively extends "the range of the traditional language of faith."<sup>39</sup> Thus, Mays argues that if Hosea's metaphors are regarded as decorative, it fails to understand the true meaning of the book. For Mays, the marriage metaphor is closely interrelated with the fertility cult in which the sexual idiom is central. He argues that Hosea's private life with his wife is not the focus of Hosea's oracles and actions; rather, the religious status of Israel reflected by the prophet's own life is the main target.

According to Mays, Baal was the god of the late autumn and winter rain storms. Therefore, the farmer worships the rain god, Baal, to supplicate for enough water which results in fertility and, moreover, secure food for life. The people thought of the land as the wife which Baal fertilized with rainfall. Sexual rites were used to anticipate and participate in Baal's intercourse with the earth. Mays states:

The foil for Hosea's use of marriage as a model of Yahweh's relation to Israel and of sexual promiscuity as the *leit-motif* of his portrayal of Israel's sin is to be found in the fertility cult of Canaanite religion ... The Baals of the local shrines throughout Canaan were manifestations of this deity...The theme of 'harlotry' is a distinctly Yahwist interpretation of Israel's involvement in the cult of Baal. The Canaanite god in his multiple manifestations at local shrines is the male figure in the drama. Israel is cast as a woman lured to give herself to the Baals in return for

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 9.

their gifts through the fertility of the land...Here metaphor and reality are almost synonymous.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, Mays asserts that the Canaanite fertility cult and its practical adoption to the sacred rite in Israel's religious tradition would be viewed as problematic in Hosea's eyes. Gomer was an active Baal cult prostitute working as a symbol for the people of Israel.<sup>41</sup> In sum, Mays' religious reading, based on the social setting of the time period, pays attention to the understanding of the marriage metaphor in terms of the Canaanite fertility cult and its representation in Hosea's preaching.

#### 4.2.1.6. Douglas Stuart, 1987

In his commentary, *Hosea-Jonah*, Douglas Stuart does not agree with the scholars who doubt the actuality of the biographical account of Hosea and Gomer and claims that Hosea's oracles are his original oral preaching which are influenced by earlier Sinai covenant tradition.<sup>42</sup> Stuart revisits Wolff's Baal fertility cult<sup>43</sup> based on his interpretation of Hos 2:7, 10, and 15 and argues that the marriage metaphor reflects the existence of a thriving Baalist cult, in conflict with the official Yahwistic cult because the text does not

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 2–3.

<sup>42</sup> Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, xxxii, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Similar to Wolff's interpretation of the Baal fertility cult, Stuart acknowledges that "the Canaanites and their many Israelite converts regarded the land as the female, which was fertilized by the rain (sperm) of Baal, who as the god of weather was *par excellence* the god of fertility." Stuart claims that Hosea utilizes this imagery in order to warn the Israelite Baalists, asserting that the land is made fertile by YHWH who rules it, and Baal is infertile. See Ibid., 48.



mention any threat “either internally from civil strife, or externally from Assyria or other foreign powers.”<sup>44</sup> He believes that such a situation also reflects that Hosea’s ministry began when the prosperity of the reign of Jeroboam II (about 760-755 BCE) flourished.<sup>45</sup>

Stuart argues that a number of indications of “Baal,” as a deity in the fertility cult, prove that the metaphor is obviously connected with the accusation of Baal worship. He states that “Baal worship was freely tolerated so that it flourished among the populace in a syncretism with Yahwism. Israel’s calling the Baals “lovers” is a metaphor first attested in Hosea, and otherwise only in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, where it also refers to rivals of Yahweh for Israel’s allegiance.”<sup>46</sup>

#### 4.2.1.7. Graham Davies, 1992

In his commentary, *Hosea*, Graham Davies argues that to understand Hosea, readers have to know the religious attitudes Hosea attacked as well as his belief about Israelite traditions. Hosea’s time was when a “polarization” between these happened in northern Israel.<sup>47</sup> Davies states that “under royal leadership, the worship of Baal and Asherah had flourished as never before.”<sup>48</sup> This is why the prophetic movement was initiated, first led by Elijah, continued by Jehonadab the son of Rechab, and finally by the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>47</sup> Davies, *Hosea*, 1992, 29–30.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 31.

army commander Jehu who overthrew the dynasty and its religious leaders (2 Kgs 9–10).<sup>49</sup> Davies’s view is similar to B. Lang who argues that the book of Hosea is the oldest document of the YHWH-alone movement, opposing polytheism. Lang believes that the book of Hosea shows an early stage of Israelite religion moving from polytheism to monotheism.<sup>50</sup> Davies’s continuing argument about the prophetic movement, such as Jehu’s achievement in overthrowing the leadership of northern Israel, suggests Hosea as a follower of such a religious coup, asserting that Hosea upheld a theology of YHWH as Israel’s only god. Davies disagrees with the major opinion raised by Wolff that such theology in the book of Deuteronomy and Hosea was produced by the same prophetic and Levitical circles.<sup>51</sup> Davies believes that the religious apostasy of the leadership was the main target of resistance, even though Jehu’s blood purge was later condemned by Hosea who thinks of murder as a sin.<sup>52</sup>

Emphasizing the marriage metaphor as a symbolic story, Davies disagrees with other scholars such as Wolff who insists Gomer was a prostitute in the Baal fertility cult. For Davies, Hosea was not defiled by any sexual relation with Gomer but focused on delivering the message that YHWH warns about “the apostate relationship of Israel to Baal” and shows “love for his people Israel, despite their evil character.”<sup>53</sup> Davies reads the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>50</sup> B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority: An Essay in Biblical History and Sociology*, SWBAS 1 (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983).

<sup>51</sup> Davies, *Hosea*, 1992, 31.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 29–38, 55.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 108.

marriage metaphor as a religious symbol to awaken the Israelites who were greatly influenced by and participated in the worship of Baal as seen in the names of Samaria ostraca, such as Baalzamar, or the scenes on the Samaria ivories and some personal seals which indicate mythological motifs. Moreover, the recent discoveries at Kuntillet Ajerud provide the evidence of the people being devoted to Baal, Asherah and the Egyptian god Bes as well as to YHWH during the Hosea's time.

However, Davies overlooks what I consider an important point about Hosea's political standpoint in relation to the religious issues. Davies does not consider how the relationship that King Jehu made with the throne of Assyria was viewed by Hosea who accused political leaders of establishing sinful relationships with other countries. Assyria was seen as a significant threat for the future of the northern kingdom. Hosea knew that the relationship Jehu established with Assyria was the biggest apostasy against YHWH.

#### 4.2.1.8. A. A. Macintosh, 1997

In his book, *Hosea*, A. A. Macintosh asserts that Hosea's marriage to Gomer represents the beginning of God's message to Israel; it is a sign or parable that conveys Israel's promiscuity in relation to Yahweh.<sup>54</sup> The children of harlotries are tainted by the behavior of their mother.<sup>55</sup> He believes that the names of the three children represent termination of Jehu's dynasty and collapse of the nation, the removal of YHWH's

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<sup>54</sup> Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 46.

forbearance, and the reversal of YHWH's covenant with Israel.<sup>56</sup> The setting of chapter two is understood as a family quarrel, not a judicial court. The children appeal to the mother to change her perverse behavior. The quotation "she is not my wife" is therefore not a legal statement of divorce.<sup>57</sup> Macintosh argues that the scene calls the younger generation of Israelites (the children) to condemn the nation's apostasy and return to the covenant relationship with YHWH.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, the simile of the mother's humiliation and subsequent death by thirst represents the threat of the husband, YHWH, to despoil Israel's land through drought and lack of fertility.<sup>59</sup> The promiscuous behavior of the wife is described as a pursuit of her lovers, the Baals, whom she believes provide her food and clothing. Macintosh notes that the resultant syncretism is manifested in the people referring to YHWH as Baal.<sup>60</sup> In Hosea 2:16, YHWH remarks that he will woo the wife into the desert and comfort her. Macintosh notes that the verb meaning "to woo," *mēpattēhā*, is used of deceit, seduction, and enticement, but asserts in this case that it is used for "coercion through love."<sup>61</sup> YHWH intends to initiate a new start, a renewal of the marriage, with his wife.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 23, 27.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 78.

#### 4.2.1.9. Ehud Ben Zvi, 2005

In his book, *Hosea*, Ehud Ben Zvi reads the book of Hosea as literature which teaches about “YHWH, Israel’s past and future, and the relations between the two.”<sup>63</sup> He places the book in the last period of political strength of the northern Israel, which in the mid-eighth century BCE led to the destruction by the Assyrians in 722 BCE. He believes that the Assyrians played a major role in its background, leading to apostasy, social disintegration, wrongful leadership, failed alliances, and lacking of knowledge of the Lord.<sup>64</sup> For Ben Zvi, the corruption of the relationship between Israel and YHWH is portrayed by the various imageries and metaphors throughout the book.

Disagreeing with any historical context associated with the life of the prophet or characters in the book, Ben Zvi argues that the book is intended to educate a target readership, probably a small group of literati in Persian Yehud for “social memory.”<sup>65</sup> The target readership was “aware of ideological constructions of Israel’s past and shared a strong hope for its future.”<sup>66</sup> Based on this assumption, Ben Zvi believes that the main themes and imagery in the first literary block (Hos 1:2–2:3) are developed in the second (Hos 2:3–25) and third (Hos 3:1–5) through the use of “marital or father/children

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<sup>63</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 6.

<sup>64</sup> Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*, ed. Michael Fishbane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1143.

<sup>65</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 41, 56.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

metaphors.”<sup>67</sup> These metaphors, according to Ben Zvi, are “the representation of the past and future relation between YHWH and Israel,” arguing that these entire three blocks are interconnected.<sup>68</sup>

As represented in the metaphoric image of husband-wife relationships, Israel’s sinful behavior is severely punished but later forgiven through divine mercy. Focusing on the book’s didactic function in the postexilic period, Ben Zvi asserts that the main message of the metaphor is not sexual sins, the marital life of Gomer, or the fate of Hosea, but “what they symbolized.”<sup>69</sup> The metaphor of harlotries of the land and the people who lived there, reflects cultic and sexual defilements. Therefore, the continual reference to the illicit worship of idols other than YHWH explains where the divine judgment comes from, and the whole book in relation to the marriage metaphor provides the ideological reason for the rereading of this didactic book throughout Israel’s history.<sup>70</sup>

#### 4.2.1.10. Summary

In the preceding sections, I have presented scholarly readings that focus on the various aspects of the religious setting of ancient Israel in terms of the marriage metaphor. These studies provide a range of approaches, such as historical criticism, redaction criticism, and sociological method, elucidating the background of the marriage metaphor.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 40–41.

First of all, as I discussed in chapter 2 (§2.1.1.), Andersen and Freedman argue that chapters 1–3 and 4–14 are two different parts which remained independent for a while until they were compiled sometime after the life of the prophet, probably during the Babylonian Exile. For them, the marriage metaphor is employed by the later editor to reflect the story of Israel in order to serve as a definitive lesson. Along the same lines, Dearman regards the marriage metaphor as one of the central themes in biblical theology which provides an unfolding drama with an eschatological future. Hosea was one of the early and primary witnesses to this theme. Dearman also observes Hosea's frequent political designations of Israel and Judah in the text and discusses the use of the term "love" in the prophecy of Hosea.<sup>71</sup> However, he does not pay attention to Israel's political setting against background of Assyria.

Harper believes that Hosea's marriage is obviously related to the Baal fertility cult because Israel's religious thought and tradition were endangered by the close contact with Baalism, fighting against Baalism as a rival religion. Wolff claims that Hosea employs a legal genre originated from the institutional setting which is similar to the law court, and utilizes a legal language to condemn the Canaanite worship which overflowed in the practice of Israel's religious worship. Wolff's interpretation and argument influence a number of the following researchers studying the book of Hosea.

On the contrary, Rudolph does not agree with Wolff's understanding of the ritual defloration of the Israelite women as a part of fertility cult, enculturated by Canaanite Baal worship. Rather, he argues that the marriage metaphor in Hos 1 was influenced and added later due to the textual representation of the relationship between YHWH and Israel

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<sup>71</sup> Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 358–360.

in Hos 2. Indeed, Rudolph emphasizes that the metaphor of the children's name functions as a prophetic message about the religious corruption of the Israelites. Along the same lines, Mays evaluates the marriage metaphor as the most effective and influential way to persuade Hosea's audience. He argues that the main focus of the marriage metaphor is not the prophet's private life with his wife, but the religious status of Israel reflected in the prophet's own life. Mays believes that the Canaanite fertility cult and its practical adoption into the sacred rites in Israel's religious tradition is the clear target of Hosea's criticism.

Scholars, such as Jacob, complain about Wolff's argument on the later redactional layer in which the editor attempts to add the promise of restoration at the end of each original judgment narrative. For example, Jacob insists that Wolff's connection to the Deuteronomistic circle based on the promise of restoration at the end of textual blocks is not right because both announcement of judgment and the promise of restoration are not different historical layers but the prophet's rhetorical scheme.

Stuart revisits Wolff's argument on the Baal fertility cult in the marriage metaphor and advances the idea that the metaphor reflects the existence of a thriving Baalist cult, competing with the official Yahwistic cult. However, Davies disagrees with Wolff and argues that the main target of the message is the leadership who promotes religious apostasy. The marriage metaphor functions to condemn the Israelites for their participation in the worship of Baal, as seen in the archeological data, such as Samaria Ostraca. Macintosh states that the resultant syncretism is manifested in the people referring to YHWH as Baal. He observes that the metaphor calls the younger generation of



the Israelites to deny the nation's apostasy and return to the covenant relationship with YHWH.

Ben Zvi's claim that the historical setting of the book is in the Persian period rests upon the questionable assumption as he himself mentions that the literati, who are Jerusalem-centered during the Persian period, do not need any warning against worshipping Baal.<sup>72</sup> Thus, his argument for the dating of the book in the Persian period is not valid.

#### 4.2.2. Political readings of the marriage motif

##### 4.2.2.1. William Moran, 1963

In his article, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," William Moran provides a valuable study about the concept of love in the bible in relation to the ideology and terminology of the Ancient Near East treaties.<sup>73</sup> In fact, one of his arguments in this article is to differentiate the concept of love (אהבה) in Hosea from that in Deuteronomy because Moran does not agree with the idea that Deuteronomy was influenced by Hosea.<sup>74</sup> According to Moran, the Book of Hosea presents the love relationship in the way that a husband loves a wife (3:1) and a father

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<sup>72</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 41.

<sup>73</sup> William Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77–87.

<sup>74</sup> Some scholars propose that Hosea is prior to Deuteronomy. See Ginsberg, "Hosea," 1010–1024. For the opposite idea, see Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, xxxi–xlii.

loves his son (11:1), namely romantic and familial/paternal relationships, respectively. However, he insists that when using the term love Deuteronomy does not display any of these relationships connected with love at all. Thus, Moran concludes that the love in Deuteronomy is different than the love in Hosea. Love in Deuteronomy is an idea grown in political language. Moreover, in Deuteronomy, love is usually “predicated of Israel in relation to Yahweh” because it is “the central preoccupation, namely, observance of the Law.”<sup>75</sup> He continues to point out this difference to support and argue that “love in Deuteronomy is a love that can be commanded.”<sup>76</sup> In other words, Moran asserts that love in Deuteronomy is “a love defined by and pledged in the covenant--a covenantal love.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, love in Deuteronomy has a longer history in relation to extra-biblical resources.

Moran analyses ancient materials, dated from the eighteenth century BCE through the eighth century BCE, and provides excellent examples in which the texts used the term love to describe “the loyalty and friendship joining independent kings, sovereign and vassal, king and subject.”<sup>78</sup> The examples are: 1) in a letter to Yasma‘-Addu, the king of Mari, the text identifies the writer who declares himself the king’s servant and expresses that he is the one who loves the king; 2) during the Amarna period, the term “love” belongs to the terminology of international relations in that the relationship or the

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<sup>75</sup> Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” 77.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

friendship between the rulers is the object of agreement and established by treaty; 3) in the case of sovereign and vassal, the Pharaoh is expected to love his vassal, and the vassal must love the Pharaoh--in other words, to be faithful to the role of vassal is to love and serve Pharaoh; 4) in the texts of Esarhaddon, the vassals continue to declare that they still love the king of Assyria; 5) 1 Kgs 5:15–26 [1Kgs 5:1–12] reports that Hiram of Tyre loves David and describes diplomatic and commercial relations between the two countries<sup>79</sup>--the love in 1 Kgs 5:15–26, therefore, must be understood as a reference to the treaty relationship that is renewed now between Hiram and Solomon.

Based on these five examples, Moran argues that the dominance of legal language with the commandment of love in Deuteronomy have “close parallels in the treaties of the first and second millennium.” Moreover, he states that the term “love” remains a duty of the vassal towards his sovereign in Assyrian treaty practices and expressions. For Moran, the parallels between Assyrian treaties and Deuteronomy prove that “deuteronomic circles were familiar with the Assyrian practice of demanding an oath of allegiance from their vassals expressed in terms of love.”<sup>80</sup> The language of love in Ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties and loyalty oaths is paralleled with that in Deuteronomic texts, indicating YHWH’s relationship with Israel.

Moran is right that the concept of “love” is clearly embedded in a vassal treaty relationship and such expression is very relevant with the old sovereign-vassal terminology of love in the Ancient Near Eastern sources, but he seems on more dubious

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<sup>79</sup> For each specific reference, see footnotes in Moran’s article.

<sup>80</sup> Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” 84.

ground when he claims that Hosea's preaching is different from that of the older covenant tradition in Deuteronomy. In other words, Moran argues that Hosea speaks of YHWH's love for Israel and not vice versa. Therefore, the concept of love in Deuteronomy and Hosea is fundamentally different. However, I think Moran is mistaken because he overlooks the ancient materials that state love language in political relationship. Whether Deuteronomy depends on Hosea or not, the use of the language sheds a light on the background of the tradition where marriage and family language employs a certain meaning in political settings.

#### 4.2.2.2. Dennis McCarthy, 1978

In his book, *Treaty and Covenant*, Dennis McCarthy argues that the covenant between Israel and God was formed and influenced by the way the ancient treaty texts were constructed.<sup>81</sup> Based on the study of the structure of the treaty texts,<sup>82</sup> McCarthy first researches ancient treaty and covenant texts in Hittite, Syrian, and Assyrian materials and discovers a common/regular form that most of these texts display/follow.<sup>83</sup> Thus, he asserts that in spite of variations in some texts, the treaty texts show a strong fundamental

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<sup>81</sup> Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*, AB 21A (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978).

<sup>82</sup> McCarthy believes that there was one common treaty form which was used to make agreements in various situations throughout most of the history of the pre-Hellenic near east. See McCarthy's understanding of the form in the treaty texts. *Ibid.*, 4–7.

<sup>83</sup> For the classic features of the form, see *ibid.*, 1–2.

unity.<sup>84</sup> This research on the unity of various treaty and covenant texts provides a basis for McCarthy to compare the treaty texts with biblical texts. He first looks at key texts that exhibit varying degrees of similarity to or awareness of the treaty/covenant document form. These passages are: 1) Deut 28:69–30:20, which is the central discourse of Deuteronomy; 2) Deut 1:6–4:40; 28:69–30:20, which is the framework of Deuteronomy; 3) 1 Sam 12; 4) Josh 24:1–28; and 5) J and E stratum, which are two frequently-reconstructed written sources that might stand behind the Sinai narrative in Exodus. He, then, argues that the comparison clearly shows “a common basic structure with the overlord proclaiming a set of stipulations and the underling obliged to accept them under divine sanction.”<sup>85</sup> In other words, he concludes that there are a number of parallels and similarities in the form and structure between the Ancient Near East texts and biblical texts.

McCarthy suggests a relationship between treaties and covenants, explaining the cultural background of the ‘covenant’ in the Hebrew Bible, especially as it is applied to Moses, Sinai, and Deuteronomy. As McCarthy looks for forms and patterns among the international treaties preserved from Israel’s older neighbors, he provides a summary of the common features of these treaties and a summary of the notable distinctions that were obtained in different locations and centuries. McCarthy, then, argues that his study yields a better approach to the genre and setting of the biblical texts, influenced by the ancient treaty texts, showing, for example, how the texts developed a covenant motif and in what structure the texts display the motif, and moreover, how these steps advance or influence

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 140.

the theological background embedded in the biblical texts. McCarthy believes that the Sinai covenant is the oldest form of the covenant and despite the years of biblical redactions, editing and adding of layers to the biblical texts, the Sinai covenant still possesses and displays the ancient treaty and covenant tradition. McCarthy states that:

the treaty tradition goes back to ancient Mesopotamian legal tradition, and there is no argument about the profound and pervasive influence of Mesopotamian culture on many aspects of life in Palestine. The Canaan from which Israel took much of its culture, even its language, went to school to Mesopotamian “science” for hepatoscopy as is revealed by the liver models for study found in Palestinian sites (e.g., Hazor). It knew Mesopotamian literature: the Gilgamesh epic has left a fragment at Megiddo, and with all their provincialisms the Amarna letters show that Akkadian was the *lingua franca* of even minor chanceries. So too with law: the case law developed in Mesopotamia fitted the agricultural village society of Palestine and was adopted by Canaanite and the Israelite.<sup>86</sup>

McCarthy has produced a thorough assessment of the evidence for readers who want to examine the relative merits of comparing covenants in the Bible with ancient international treaties--whether using the analogy to date biblical texts or to interpret them.

In conversation with Moran, McCarthy believes that “the particular relation involved is that which obtained between lord and vassal which, as a duty, could be commanded, and yet retained a definite affective element.”<sup>87</sup> He suggests other examples of this combination of attitudes in Barrakab of Sam'al, the Assyrian exhortations to love one's lord with the whole heart, and Hittites' expressions in various archeological

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 161.

materials.<sup>88</sup> The language which equates the ‘treaty relationship’ with the familial is obviously relevant because the ancient society knew the family relationship as one involving love but emphatically including obedience without making much of the distinction between the two aspects so that love was a duty open to command. McCarthy proposes that “ancient family attitudes could and probably did reinforce attitudes the treaties sought to inculcate.”<sup>89</sup> They help explain and give weight to the treaty covenant’s demand that one loves one another.

#### 4.2.2.3. Brad Kelle, 2005

In his book, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, Brad Kelle evaluates scholarly interpretations of the metaphor of lovers.<sup>90</sup> While indicating that the common view interprets the metaphor of lovers as a reference to other gods for whom the Israelites have forsaken YHWH, Kelle provides a new approach to interpreting this metaphor. He acknowledges that the root אהב (love) appears 247 times in various forms and is employed in a wide range of ways from the literal to the metaphorical.<sup>91</sup> Based on Moran’s argument, Kelle points out that “there was a conventional use of

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 122–140, 161.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>90</sup> Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, 112–122.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 113–114. Kelle introduces G. Wallis analysis of word *ahab* stating that “the scope of the concept to love/love in the OT idiom is very broad. It extends from the affection of members of the opposite sex for one another...or even conjugal intercourse itself...or between mother and her favorite child...even to the intimate relationship between a people and their military leader.”

‘love/lover’ as a trope for the relations of vassals or treaty partners within Ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaty language.”<sup>92</sup> Kelle further supplements his argument with examples from the corpus of Assyrian political documents and concludes that “there was a well substantiated tradition of using love language to refer to a politically ally or relationship” from the eighteenth through seventh century BCE.<sup>93</sup>

Kelle introduces a study of J. Thompson who explores the instances of אהב which carry political meanings in the Hebrew Bible. For Thompson, political overtones appear following in the narratives: 1) the David and Jonathan stories; 2) YHWH’s love for Israel, depicted as the love of a suzerain for a vassal (Deut 10:15; 23:5; 1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chron 2:11; 9:8; Jer 31:3; Mal 1:2); and 3) some legal texts describing the relationship between a master and slave (Exod 21:5; Deut 15:16).<sup>94</sup> Conclusively, Kelle argues that there is “a clear and well substantiated metaphorical tradition” that uses the language of love to define or prompt political relationships.<sup>95</sup>

For Kelle, two observations indicate that the primary meaning of the metaphor and the use of love language refers to the political expression of lovers: first, the piel participle forms of the root אהב outside of Hosea, such as those seen in Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Lamentations, clearly and explicitly employ the metaphor to represent inappropriate political allies; in turn, all five of the appearances of אהב in Hos 2 are in the form of a piel

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. For more information about such materials, see S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988).

<sup>94</sup> Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, 116.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 118.



participle. In addition, the Targum of Hos 2:7 translated the term גוֹיִם as “nations” based on the political sense, Kelle’s second observation is that Hos 2 relies on various words in terms of war imagery mostly used in connection with political description. Given the background of such imagery, the term “lovers” is probably one of the working devices in the chapter’s overall theme.<sup>96</sup>

Kelle concludes that in light of the background of biblical and extra-biblical traditions of using lovers as a metaphor for political allies, the religious reading of the term “lovers” as illegitimate deities does not take full account of its use. Rather, the political reading of the term provides “more insight into the rhetorical horizon constructed by Hos 2 and defines further the type of situation in which the oracle may have functioned as a word from YHWH.”<sup>97</sup>

#### 4.2.2.4. Summary

Moran observes that both the dominance of legal language with the commandment of love in Deuteronomy and that of the treaties share many literary features such as the term love as an expression that a vassal must show loyalty towards his sovereign in Assyrian treaty text. McCarthy extends Moran’s study and argues that such similarities in the form and structure can be found in more materials as the Ancient Near East texts and biblical texts broadly display them. For McCarthy, Israel was deeply influenced by Canaan culture which was also influenced by ancient Mesopotamian

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 122.

traditions. Within this cultural connection, family/marriage language, adopted and utilized from the covenant language in the ancient world, frequently point to political relationship and treaties.

In my opinion, Hosea's understanding of the love of God for Israel is also connected with covenantal love.<sup>98</sup> In other words, unlike the way Moran argues, there are multiple applications to show how Hosea utilizes covenant love language. Along the same lines, in his article, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel," Dennis McCarthy asks why the imagery of father and son is irrelevant to the Deuteronomic conception.<sup>99</sup> McCarthy argues that "the ancient Israelites concept of Israel as Yahweh's son is very close to the Deuteronomic conception articulated in terms of the treaty or covenant and should not be separated entirely from it."<sup>100</sup> In addition, McCarthy adds that the language and concept of covenantal love remain connected with the idea of the father-son relationship based on the concepts such as loyalty, obedience, and reverence, as indicated in the political treaty with Assyria.

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<sup>98</sup> Moran's study of love in Deuteronomy, compared with the Book of Hosea, has been adopted and expanded by other scholars. See Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*'āhēb*, *'ahābā*) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52, no. 4 (2002): 437–58; John McKay, "Man's Love for God in Deuteronomy and the Father/Teacher-Son/Pupil Relationship," *VT* 22, no. 4 (1972): 426–35; Dennis McCarthy, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 144–47.

<sup>99</sup> McCarthy, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel."

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

The study of Moran has suggested that the ancient concept of “love” was the terminology used for treaty and covenant relationships. As Moran argues, there are clear connections between the marriage/family language and covenant/treaty language. These discussions add weight to my argument that marriage/family traditions in the ancient world so frequently point to political relationships and treaties. Moreover, Kelle’s research on the term אהב provides an adequate interpretation of the use of the term in political setting as well as a proper connection with the intention of the text.

In her article, “The Personal is Political,” Susan Ackerman argues that there are some important points of overlap between two different concepts of love in the Bible: interpersonal relationship texts and covenantal texts (the divine-human covenant).<sup>101</sup> Based on Moran’s argument that the concept of love in Deuteronomy is not a modern notion which defines love in terms of a tender psychological feeling, but a concept used in political language tradition, Ackerman further elaborates that the terms *’āhēb* and *’ahābā* are not used to describe a mutual or reciprocal relationship, but they are typically applied only to the hierarchically superior party in the relationship. For example, the Bible is speaking of a father’s love but not that of his children. YHWH is said to love the Israelites but the Bible does not describe the people actually offering YHWH this love; YHWH confesses that “I love you” in Isa 18:4 but there is no expression of Israel extending love toward YHWH.<sup>102</sup> Thus, Ackerman believes that

the specific way in which the terms *’āhēb* and *’ahābā* are construed in accounts of male-female relationships, of parent-child relationships, and of the divine-human

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<sup>101</sup> Ackerman, “The Personal Is Political.”

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 440–447.

relationship does seem well described by the two common qualities I have just rehearsed: first, that male-female, parent-child, and divine-human love are construed in a way that is very one-sided, and, second, that, in each of these relationships, it is typically the hierarchically superior partner who is characterized as “loving”.<sup>103</sup>

While acknowledging the frequent shift of the use of the terms between the imagery of covenantal and the imagery of interpersonal love, Ackerman proposes that the texts speaking of other gods or nations as Israel’s lovers follow these two principles.

These findings will have significant applications in the study of the political dimensions of Hos 1–3. Scholars focus on the religious issues in the text; however, marriage/family traditions in the ancient world frequently point to political relationships and treaties. The marriage motif in the text is clear as indicated in Hos 1:2, “Go, marry a woman of harlotries and children of harlotries, for the land commits harlotry by going away from YHWH”<sup>104</sup>; in Hos 2:16, “On that day, says the LORD, you will call me, ‘My husband,’ and no longer will you call me, ‘My Baal’”; in Hos 2:19–20, “And I will take you for my wife forever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD”; and finally in Hos 3:1, “The LORD said to me again, ‘Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.’” One interesting aspect of the marriage motif in Hos 1–3 is that the marriage is always commanded in that either Hosea is commanded to love a woman of fornication or the Israelites are commanded to

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 447.

<sup>104</sup> Translations are mine unless noted.

love/call YHWH as husband. In that sense, marriage and love are self-initiated. Rather, they are divine commands.

#### 4.2.3. Socio-political readings of the marriage metaphor

##### 4.2.3.1. Alice Keefe, 1995

In her article, “The Female Body, the Body Politic and the Land: A Sociopolitical Reading of Hosea 1-2,” Alice Keefe examines the relationship between Hosea’s sexual imagery and the exploitative social and political policies established during and after the reign of Jeroboam II.<sup>105</sup> State policies promoting latifundialization profited the ruling elite while impoverishing the rural farmers that produced the grain, wine, and oil.<sup>106</sup> The ruling elite exported surplus agricultural products in exchange for imported luxury items and military equipment.<sup>107</sup>

According to Keefe, the transformation of traditional kinship structures and the village based subsistence economy to a state run commercial economy created a socio-religious crisis in Israel.<sup>108</sup> Hosea’s language concerning illicit female sexuality relates primarily to “issues of social disintegration and violence.”<sup>109</sup> Keefe claims that pursuing

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<sup>105</sup> Keefe, “The Female Body, the Body Politic and the Land,” 72.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 90.

lovers in Hosea 2 relates to political alliances with foreign nations and a state economy based on latifundial agriculture.<sup>110</sup> The breakdown of Hosea's family represents the disintegration and future devastation of "traditional Israelite life" caused by the policies of Israel's elite.<sup>111</sup> The values of the highland villagers, equated with religious orientation, are understood as tied to the *bātē āb*, "whose integrity in turn rested upon control of its patrimonial lands, by which its sustenance was ensured; and in its control of female sexuality, by which its perpetuation over the generations was ensured."<sup>112</sup>

The official cult of Yahweh in Israel and Judah legitimated the king and the political structure of the monarchy. Existing beside the official religion was the popular religion concerned with fertility that upheld the values of traditional kinship structures. This popular religion had both private and public levels, both of which involved use of female fertility images (female figurines and Asherah poles).<sup>113</sup> Keefe argues that Hosea does not refer to these feminine icons, and that it is the official state cultus, not popular religion, condemned by Hosea.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 87.

#### 4.2.3.2. Marvin Sweeney, 2000

In his commentary, *The Twelve Prophets*, Sweeney proposes that the intention of the book of Hosea is to reflect the social-political setting of the rise of Assyrian power in the mid-eighth century BCE.<sup>115</sup> He denies that many references of the book point to a time of suffering when Israel is invaded by the Assyrian force. Rather, Sweeney, pointing to the reference to the house of Jehu, argues that the book does not describe the actual Assyrian assault of Israel.<sup>116</sup> Sweeney explores how Hosea is involved in the debate over Israel's future during the time of political chaos from King Jeroboam II through King Hoshea and argues that the book is largely written during the years following the death of Jeroboam II and before the Assyrian attack in 735 BCE.<sup>117</sup>

The marriage metaphor, including Hosea's marriage to Gomer, having children of harlotries, and naming them with unthinkable names, emphasizes Hosea's symbolic act that displays YHWH's relationship with Israel. Sweeney believes that symbolic action represents the intentions of YHWH in the world so as to acknowledge impending punishment unless the Israelites repent.<sup>118</sup> Thus, Hosea's concerns in the marriage metaphor are "Israelite conceptions of Canaanite fertility rites and Israel's political relations with Assyria and Egypt."<sup>119</sup> For Sweeney, Hosea's prophetic speech calls upon its audience to repent and envisions a restoration of relationship through both religious

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<sup>115</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:3.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 1:4.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 1:4–6.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 1:13.

<sup>119</sup> Sweeney, *Tanak*, 346.

and political actions. Such actions would be Israel's "return to the wilderness to renew the marriage/covenant as in the days of the exodus from Egypt...when Israel was formed as a nation."<sup>120</sup> He believes that the main focus of the marriage metaphor is to argue that Israel has to stop the alliance with Assyria and return to the alliance with Aram.

#### 4.2.3.3. Gale Yee, 2001

In her article, "She Is Not My Wife and I Am Not Her Husband," Gale Yee uses ideological criticism to examine the relationship between the YHWH-Israel marriage metaphor and the "material and socio-historical conditions" that provoke it.<sup>121</sup> In her book, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, Yee uses redaction criticism to argue that the original Hosean material mainly speaks of political issues in the use of the term, lovers, which describes Israel's inappropriate political relationships.<sup>122</sup> In another article, "Hosea," Yee argues that abuse of the religious cult, transition from a familial mode of agricultural production to a tributary one, and dependence on foreign alliances began with establishment of the monarchy.<sup>123</sup> She argues that deliverance from state oppression is a major concern for the prophet Hosea.<sup>124</sup> Based on the concept of economic oppression, Yee concludes that the promiscuity of Israel represents the

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>121</sup> Yee, "She Is Not My Wife and I Am Not Her Husband," 345.

<sup>122</sup> Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, 305–308.

<sup>123</sup> Yee, "Hosea," 346.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 364.



monarchy's desire for cash crops (oil, wine, and grain).<sup>125</sup> This tributary economy benefited the ruling elite of Israel who exploited the highland villagers and lowland peasantry. After the reign of Jeroboam II, corruption and greed among the elite class led to violence and instability among the nation's leaders. Israel wavered between policies of independence and foreign alliance in the face of Assyrian invasion. When Israel was forced to pay tribute to Assyria, the elites passed the burden onto the already oppressed peasantry.<sup>126</sup>

Yee supports the view that Yahwism developed out of the indigenous Canaanite religion, and that Hosea advocated "polemical monolatry."<sup>127</sup> This religious view gave rise to the gender-specific marriage metaphor between YHWH and Israel. Since worship of the goddess Asherah is not directly condemned in Hosea, some scholars propose that it is cultic prostitution that gives rise to the figure of the adulterous wife. Even though scholars admit that there is little direct evidence for the practice of cultic prostitution in the Ancient Near East, the presupposition of its existence persists among scholars.<sup>128</sup> Yee suggests that the prophet's accusation of female sexual promiscuity is a means to denigrate and condemn the Israelite elite (kings, priests, prophets, and princes) for their cultic transgressions and exploitative domestic and foreign policies. Israel's elite is inferior to and distinct from the YHWH-alone group advocated by Hosea.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Yee, "She Is Not My Wife and I Am Not Her Husband," 347.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

#### 4.2.3.4. Summary

Keefe proposes that Hosea's language, depicting illicit female sexuality, primarily relates to the social issues that create different social groups. Such differentiation was constructed by policies of Israel's elite. According to Keefe, Hosea's criticism of Gomer who pursues other lovers in Hos 2 reflects social disintegration, economic oppression, and political alliances with foreign nations based on latifundial agriculture. Hosea, therefore, condemns the official cult of YHWH in Israel and Judah which legitimated the king and the political structure of monarchy. Sweeney, focusing on the social-political setting of the rise of Assyria as the background of the marriage metaphor, argues that the marriage metaphor emphasizes the relationship between YHWH and Israel. Hosea's prophetic speech asserts a restoration of the relationship through both religious and political actions. Yee insists that Hosea accuses the Israelite elite (kings, priests, prophets, and princes) of their economic oppression. The peasantry has to produce oil, wine, and grain for the elite as well as for the payment of tribute to Assyria. Therefore, that leaves nothing for the peasantry to live on.

#### 4.3. Form Critical Analysis of the Marriage Motif in Hos 1–3

In Hos 1–3, generally called as the marriage metaphor, the three distinctive verses (Hos 1:2; 2:18 [16]; and 3:1) along with the narrative stories show the marriage motif, stating, for example, that “Go, marry a woman of harlotries and children of harlotries,” in Hos 1:2; “...you will call me, ‘My husband’” in Hos 2:18; and “...Go, again love a

woman being loved by her companion and commits adultery, even as YHWH loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes” in Hos 3:1. These statements became the major focus of the discussion of the marriage metaphor as they sound peculiar and provide Hosea’s marriage as a metaphoric reflection or example in that 1) Hos 1–3 has been regarded as the main section of Hosea’s preaching; 2) Hosea is driven to the abnormal marriage to be a model of the lover who loves sinful Israel; and 3) Hosea advocates religious revival through his own marriage commanded by YHWH. In addition, the command made by YHWH became a target of feminist critics as they understand that the book is used to oppress women or construct a false image of the female body. They propose many new approaches to break old biased tradition that violate all feminist principles.<sup>130</sup>

However, these scholarly discussions pay too much attention to the marriage metaphor in conjunction with synchronic approaches which analyze the text in various literary methods, which will be surveyed below. Interpretations based on synchronic approaches yield fruitful outcomes. However, synchronic approaches to the text should be combined with diachronic approaches to understand the settings and contexts of the

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<sup>130</sup> Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 298–99; Athalya Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2004), 40–243; Landy, *Hosea*, 31, 35. Many feminist scholars are concerned with the ideological message in a metaphor that portrays YHWH as the authoritative patriarch who batters his wife into submission and utterly humiliates her. The metaphorical representation of apostate Israel as a woman of harlotries ostensibly reinforces the perception that women cannot control their sexual passions and thus they must be controlled and mastered. After the wife has been beaten and abused, the husband can seduce her back into a “loving” relationship. Scholars such as Fontaine express concern, not only about Hosea’s “patriarchal agendas,” but even more about the potential of the fused voice of God, the narrator, and the prophet to “seduce the unwary” into violence. See Fontaine, “A Response to Hosea,” 64.

text. It is true that when both synchronic and diachronic analyses have joined together, the interpretation of the text will show more precise and careful outcome.

In the exegesis of each chapter, I will analyze these three verses in detail because these statements not only effectively display Hosea's main concern of Israel's political situation, but also carefully show how Hosea uses the ancient marriage motif in his argument and debate. Before we begin to analyze Hos 1–3 in relation to the marriage motif, the overall literary structure of the book of Hosea must be established first in order to situate the account under discussion within the larger literary setting. It is because the account under discussion exists primarily as a part of the whole. Thus, before diving into the detailed examination of the smaller unit, we must establish the literary context of the account within the whole.

#### 4.3.1. Structure of the book of Hosea

Form critical analysis of Hos 1–3 must begin from the understanding of the context of the book of Hosea as a whole. Following that, I will analyze Hos 1–3. The purpose of the structural analysis of the entire book is, therefore, to provide the literary context of our focus text, Hos 1–3. For this reason, I will not provide an interpretation of the whole book. The analysis is limited only to the structural dimension of the text.

#### The Structure of the Book of Hosea (1:1–14:10)

I. Superscription: The Word of YHWH unto Hosea	1:1
II. Main Body of the Book: parenetic Appeal for Israel's Return	1:2–14:9

A. Narrative account of YHWH's instruction to Hosea: marry the harlot, Gomer, and name his children	1:2–2:2
B. Narrative account of Hosea's speeches: appeal for Israel's return	2:3–14:9
1. Hosea's appeal to children for their mother's return: promise of restoration of Israel	2:3–3:5
2. Hosea's report of YHWH's basic charges against Israel: abandonment of YHWH	4:1–19
3. Detailed report of YHWH's charges against Israel	5:1–14:1
a. Initial statement of issues: Israel's harlotries and illegitimate children	5:1–7
b. Concerning Israel's alliance with Assyria and Egypt	5:8–7:16
c. Concerning Israel's crime of assimilating foreign religious practices and political relations	8:1–14
d. Concerning Israel's illicit worship and betrayal of YHWH	9:1–14:1
4. Hosea's appeal to Israel for their return to YHWH: Assyria cannot save Israel	14:2–9
III. Postscript: concluding exhortation concerning wisdom to understand YHWH's righteousness <sup>131</sup>	14:10
*Based on MT	

The above structure is based on the reading of the voice markers.<sup>132</sup> During most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been customary to treat Hos 1–3 as a distinct narrative regarding Hosea's marriage along with other two divisions: Hos 4–11 (oracles of judgement

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 4–10; Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 175; Sweeney, *Tanak*, 346; Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," 12–13.

<sup>132</sup> Unlike other scholars' structural models, Sweeney's model carefully pays attention to the synchronic structure and generic character of the book of Hosea, distinguishing literary voice markers. Cf. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:8–141.

followed by restoration) and Hos 12–14 (additional oracles of judgment followed by restoration).<sup>133</sup> This is based on the literary presuppositions, thematic assessment, and redaction criticism that stand behind Wolff's identification of three textual divisions within the book as a whole. Wolff's interpretation holds that each division displays an original text of judgment from the prophet, and the text has been modified and redacted by the addition of material pertaining to restoration at a later time. Wolff argues that the three textual blocks end with the narratives of restoration and his interpretation speaks to the major scholarly groups who follow his divisions based on redaction criticism.<sup>134</sup>

However, recent research on the literary characters as well as the voice markers of each chapter proves that Wolff's argument on the tripartite divisions does not make sense. As I have argued in the structure of the book of Hosea, Hos 1–3 cannot stand synchronically as a unit. For example, the narrative in Hos 1 is written about Hosea in an objective form (3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative), whereas the narrative in Hos 3 is autobiographical (1<sup>st</sup> person narrative). Moreover, I have already criticized the misunderstanding of prior structural divisions which yield wrong approaches, separating textual blocks otherwise speaking one voice of the prophet, Hosea.

In his article, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," Sweeney raises questions about the conceptualized tripartite structure based on the redactional criticism which views Israel's restoration in the text is the later addition and asks why the proclamation of

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<sup>133</sup> The structural demarcation of the book of Hosea into three primary parts appears in most commentaries as discussed in the structure in this chapter. Additionally, see Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature*, 178. Cf. Sweeney, *Tanak*; Ben Zvi, *Hosea*.

<sup>134</sup> For scholarly opinions about tripartite division, see chapter two.

restoration would not be the prophet's own voice.<sup>135</sup> For him, the prophet is one who simultaneously delivers judgment as well as restoration, expecting that people, who are listening to the prophet's message, understand the imminent punishment as a way of judgment and decide to return to YHWH. For this people, the prophet has to proclaim the promise of restoration as the way to persuade his audience. According to Sweeney, form critical approach to the structure of the book of Hosea must be based upon its formal syntactical and semantic features in the book. Sweeney argues that readers must acknowledge the generic character of Hosea as a rhetorical work in order to fully understand the text, which consists of several voices.<sup>136</sup> In other words, he asserts that the previous structural model of the book of Hosea ignores the book's formal syntactical and semantic features.

The structure formation that I suggest properly acknowledges the literary content based on the narrative voice in the text. Overall, the book of Hosea contains three basic components: the superscription (Hos 1:1), which identifies the work of Hosea with historical background; and secondly, the main body (Hos 1:2–14:9 [14:8]), which announces the main message that Israel must heed the prophet's proclamation asserting Israel's return, based on the acknowledgement of the realization of YHWH's plan for Israel; and lastly, the postscript (Hos 14:10 [14:9]), in which the reader is encouraged to be a righteous man through wisdom, balance the whole book as bookends. In other words, the main body provides the basis for the projection of the full realization of YHWH's worldwide sovereignty.

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<sup>135</sup> Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea."

<sup>136</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:7.

First of all, the superscription portrays the book's historical setting with the prophet's personal information. This verse is clearly a separate entity as it stands apart from the following narrative section.

Second, the main body section includes two major components: one is a narrative account of YHWH's instruction to Hosea to marry the harlot, Gomer, and name his children symbolically, in order to present the current state of Israel's apostasy in Hos 1:2–2:2. This textual block clearly indicates that Hosea is not speaking at all. The narrator reports YHWH's instructions to Hosea while the next block focuses on Hosea's own words concerning various matters that he interprets. The other is the combination of Hosea's four speech blocks concerning appeal for Israel's return in Hos 2:3–14:9. Throughout this block, the text lacks the identification of the speaker and the addressee in the narrative style of Hos 1:2–2:2. Rather, Hosea addresses Israel directly by using an imperative voice in Hos 4:1; 5:1; 6:1, 9:1; and 14:2. Furthermore, the second section, Hosea's speeches concerning appeal for Israel's return, divides into four distinct subsections: Hos 2:3–3:5 addresses his children for their mother's return and further insists that restoration of united people will be promised by YHWH; Hos 4:1–19 emphasizes YHWH's basic charges against Israel for their abandonment of YHWH; Hos 5:1–14:1 specifically addresses various subjects with an imperative or second person address form, accusing each of their sinful behaviors; and lastly, Hos 14:2–9 addresses Israel's return to YHWH because in his view, the alliance with Assyria was worthless.

Third, the postscript appears to be a conclusion of the book, emphasizing that knowing the will of YHWH and having wisdom is the only way to be a righteous man.



As seen in this division, Hos 1–3 is distinctively separated as two different text blocks (excluding Hos 1:1 as a superscription). For the purpose of the analysis of the so-called “marriage metaphor,” I will explore the two different sections discovering the marriage motif in relation to the discussion of the possible connection with the texts on the political relationship and treaties.

#### 4.3.2. The Superscription: the Word of YHWH unto Hosea (Hos 1:1)

##### 4.3.2.1. Translation and critical notes

<sup>1:1</sup> The word of YHWH which came to Hosea, son of Beerī, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, King of Israel

##### 4.3.2.2. Structure

I. Superscription: The Word of YHWH unto Hosea	1:1
A. Prophetic formula	1:1a
1. The word of YHWH	1:1aα
2. Account of the prophet, Hosea	1:1β
B. Information of chronology	1:1b
1. In the days of kings of Judah	1:1bα
2. In the days of king of Israel	1:1bβ

\*Based on MT

The book of Hosea begins with the superscription that the prophetic books commonly consist at the first verse of the entire book.<sup>137</sup> Superscriptions always

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<sup>137</sup> The structure and form of the superscription in Hos 1:1 is very similar to those found in Joel 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1. Variant forms appear in Isa 1:1; Jer 1:1–2; Ezek 1:3;

distinctively stand apart from the other part of the book as generically and structurally separated entities. The function of the superscriptions is generally to introduce and explain the material that follows. Namely, Hos 1:1 introduces the following material in Hos 1:2–14:10 [14:9] as “the word of the YHWH that came to Hosea, son of Beeri,” and explains historical background as “in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam, son of Joash of Israel.” One of features of superscriptions is their third person titular style. Unlike prose or poetry which appear as complete statements, superscriptions do not constitute full sentences. The narrator is speaking in this text to Hosea about the word of YHWH.

Many scholars attribute the superscription of Hosea 1:1 to a Judean redactor. This conclusion is based on the list of Judean kings up to the reign of Hezekiah, but the text mentions only one Israelite king, Jeroboam, the son of Joash.<sup>138</sup> Wolff believes that a later redactor used preexisting material from the time of Jeroboam II.<sup>139</sup> However, Wolff does not consider Hosea’s own political perspective and intention. In my opinion, it is more probable that Hosea would have left Israel either during the reign of King Menahem when King Shallum was assassinated or when King Pekah failed his anti-Assyrian coalition. He was an opponent of the state policy which was pro-Assyrian and needed to find a safe place in Judah in order to avoid any oppression as well as to criticize the

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Jonah 1:1; Zech 1:1; Hag 1:1; and Mal 1:1. According to Sweeney, these variations are of the typical prophetic formula, “and the word of YHWH was unto X,” that begins oracular speech to a prophet with divine authority. See. *ibid.*, 1:8.

<sup>138</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

northern monarchy continually.<sup>140</sup> Condemnation of Israel's kings is seen throughout Hosea. There are indicators that the royal administration has been corrupt since its inception: for example, mention of the people's initial request for a king (Hos. 13:10); Gilgal, the place where kingship was renewed (1 Samuel 11:14); and Jehu, the first king of Jeroboam II's dynasty.

#### 4.3.3. Narrative account of YHWH's instruction to Hosea (1:2–2:2[1:2–1:11])

##### 4.3.3.1. Translation and critical notes

<sup>1:2</sup> The beginning of YHWH's speaking to Hosea,<sup>141</sup> YHWH said to him:

*“Go, marry a woman of harlotries<sup>142</sup> and children of harlotries, for the land commits harlotry by going away from YHWH.”*

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:10. Sweeney proposes that Hosea left Israel as early as the reign of Zechariah.

<sup>141</sup> As Sweeney argues, since verse 2a does not include any temporal particle, a general translation, “when the Lord first spoke through Hosea,” which limits 2a as serving only 2b, is problematic. The LXX and Peshitta both use the substantive form of דָּבָר. As noted by Macintosh, Aquila uses the finite verb consistent with MT. Cf. *Ibid.*, 1:14; Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 10.

<sup>142</sup> The Hebrew word זִנָּיִם is translated as a woman of “harlotries” indicating that the text uses plural form of the noun. The Hebrew Bible employs two different terms for prostitute: זִנָּה which means an “illicit heterosexual intercourse”; קְדֵשׁ which means a “temple prostitute.” Deut 23:17–18 prohibits bringing a prostitute (זִנָּה) into the house of YHWH as well as becoming a temple prostitute (קְדֵשׁ). Since there is a term for a temple prostitute, “a woman of harlotries” probably does not mean a temple prostitute. Figuratively speaking, TWOT states “Figuratively, the thought may concern forbidden intentional intercourse, of one nation (especially Israel) having dealings with other nations It may also refer to religious intercourse, of Israel worshipping false gods.” See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew*

<sup>3</sup>So he went and married Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup>And YHWH said to him:

*“Call his name Jezreel, for in a short time I will take vengeance on the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup>On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.”*

<sup>6</sup>And again she conceived and bore a daughter. Then YHWH said to him:

*“Call her name ‘Lo-Ruhamah,’ for I will no longer show compassion towards the house of Israel, but I will surely forgive them.<sup>143</sup> <sup>7</sup>And I will have compassion on the house of Judah; I will deliver them by YHWH their God. I will not deliver them by bow, sword, war, horses, or horsemen.”<sup>144</sup>*

<sup>8</sup>When she had weaned ‘Lo-Ruhamah,’ she conceived and bore a son. <sup>9</sup>And YHWH said,

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*and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 275, 873; R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Publishers, 2003).

<sup>143</sup>The LXX reads ἀντιτασσόμενος ἀντιτάξομαι, thus the form נָשָׁן נָשָׁן is assumed. Wolff notes that the BHS assumption is not supported, since נָשָׁן is always translated μισεῖν. Cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, 8. The verb נָשָׁן refers to “take away” sin in Hosea 14:3. Although there is no reference to the direct object in 1:6, the context likely supplies it in repeated reference and allusion to Exodus 34:6, where the direct object of the verb is iniquity, transgression, and sin. This usage is consistent with that of Hosea 14:3. Sweeney suggests that the initial *kî* has to be translated as “but” as an asseverative particle rather than a normal causative particle. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:21.

<sup>144</sup>Many commentators attribute this verse to a later Judean redactor after the fall of the Northern Kingdom or even during the exile who wished for a Judean restoration. However, in conjunction with the later statements in Hos 3:1–5, Sweeney argues that it is possible to read it with pre-exilic setting influenced by Judean kings, such as Hezekiah or Josiah. Macintosh argues that the verse may refer to the sense that Judah may be saved if they do not follow the idolatrous ways of the North. Cf. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:21; Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 25.

“Call his name ‘Lo-Ammi,’ for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”<sup>145</sup>

<sup>2:1</sup> Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea which cannot be measured and cannot be counted. And in the place where it was said to them

“You are not my people,”

it will be said to them,

“Sons of the Living God.”

<sup>2</sup> And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will place one leader for them, and they will come up from the land, for great is the day of Jezreel.

#### 4.3.3.2. Structure

##### The Structure of Hos 1:2–2:2 [1:2–1:11]

##### Narrative Account of YHWH’s Instruction to Hosea

I. Introduction	1:2a
II. Account of YHWH’s Initial Instruction to Hosea	1:2b–2:2
A. YHWH’s initial instruction	2b
1. Divine speech formula	2bα
2. YHWH commands Hosea to marry a wife and have children	2bβ <sup>1-7</sup>
3. Reason: the land commits great harlotry	2bβ <sup>8-13</sup>
B. Hosea’s fulfillment of YHWH’s instruction	1:3–2:2

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<sup>145</sup>BHS proposes אֱלֹהֵיכֶם rather than אֱלֹהֵי לָכֶם. Sweeney argues that the author intentionally used the form in the MT as a word play on the name of God revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. This is the event when Israel and YHWH entered into the covenant relationship that is being broken in the first two chapters of Hosea. Cf. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:22; Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 28.

1. Hosea's active response to YHWH	3
a. Marry to Gomer, a wife of harlotries	3a
b. Gomer bears the first son	3b
2. First child: Jezreel	4-5
a. Divine speech formula	4aα
b. Name him Jezreel!	4aβ
c. Metaphorical implication of YHWH in Jezreel	4b-5
3. Second child: Lo Ruhama	6-7
a. Narrative report of Gomer's second child	6aα
b. Speech formula	6aβ <sup>1-2</sup>
c. Name her Lo Ruhama!	6aβ <sup>3-6</sup>
d. Metaphorical implication of YHWH in Lo Ruhama	6b
e. Prophetic announcement of salvation toward Judah	7
4. Third child: Lo Ammi	8-9
a. Narrative report of Gomer's third child	8
b. Speech formula	9aα
c. Name him Lo Ammi!	9aβ
d. Metaphorical implication of YHWH in Lo Ammi	9b
e. Promise of Restoration for Israel and Judah	2:1-2

\*Based on MT

Following the superscription, Hos 1:2-2:2 [1:11] is the first major part of the main body indicated in the structure of the book of Hosea above (See II. Main Body: Parenetic Appeal for Israel's Return 1:2-14:9). Hos 1:2-2:2 begins the main body of the book as a narrative account of YHWH's instruction to Hosea to marry the harlot Gomer and give their children symbolic names. This text block is distinctively separate from the superscription in 1:1, as well as the next major text part in 2:3-14:9, because the speaker of the narratives is different. This textual block also states YHWH's didactic and

metaphoric announcement through Hosea's family members, especially by using symbolical expressions of Hosea's children's names.

The boundaries of this unit are determined by the introductory prophetic word formula in Hos 1:2a; Hosea's active response in Hos 1:3; thematic characterizations of his children; and Hosea's hope for restoration.

Hos 1:2a works as an introduction like the superscription of the book. The introduction identifies not only who is speaking in this text, but also to whom the text is addressed. This very formal introduction gives a weight to the text as a prophecy from YHWH. In the beginning of Hosea's prophetic ministry, it is YHWH who initiates his plan. The Hebrew beginning (הַיְּמִינִי) used to designate the first step or time of a thing/action, appears in both the narratives (e. g. Gen 13:3; 41:21; Jdg 1:1) and wisdom literature (e. g. Pro 9:10; Ecc 10:13). This introduction makes readers expect series of the words of YHWH's instruction to Hosea and structures as a separate block until Hos 2:2. However, as Sweeney points out, the phrase is frequently considered as a temporal introduction but lacks a temporal particle, such as כִּי, וְ, and אֲשֶׁר. Therefore, the following entire section of YHWH's speeches to Hosea should be introduced by Hos 1:2a.

Hos 1:2b begins this section with the narrative delivering YHWH's command directly to Hosea: "marry a woman of harlotries and children of harlotries!" Everything following this instruction (1:2b) in this section is a response to the instruction. Thus, 1:2b–2:2 features Hosea taking actions in order to comply with YHWH's continuing commands in 1:2; 1:4; 1:6; and 1:9. Therefore, the separation of 1:2b from 1:3–2:2 provides the second division within 1:2–2:2.

Hos 1:3–9 easily divides into four sections by change of topics: Hos 1:3 features a report of Hosea’s active response to YHWH; Hos 1:4–5 consists of YHWH’s command on Hosea’s first son and YHWH’s intention; Hos 1:6–7 reports Gomer’s second daughter and YHWH’s intention on her name; and Hos 1:8–9 again continues to introduce YHWH’s intention on Hosea’s third child. Continually, YHWH speaks of the promise of restoration for Israel and Judah.

#### 4.3.3.3. Genre

First of all, the book of Hosea is the Prophetic Book (*prophetisches Buch*). This book is a literary presentation of the sayings of the prophet, Hosea. Certainly, the book begins with the superscription in Hos 1:1 indicating that the book is the word of YHWH that came to Hosea, son of Beerī. Following identification of the historical circumstances of the prophet is also one of features of the superscription which confirms the writing’s genre. However, it is important that the prophetic book contains various forms because it includes the large number of generic elements to deliver the prophet’s sayings. In other words, prophetic books are collections in the broad sense and each prophetic book contains various organizations.<sup>146</sup>

Like the book of Hosea as a whole, Hos 1:2–2:2 utilizes a variety of genres in order to convey meaning. Hos 1:2–2:2 is mainly a prophetic announcement. In addition, prophetic announcement includes prophetic announcement of punishment against the

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<sup>146</sup> For detailed study of genres, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, FOTL 16 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 512–47.



people (1:4b–5, 6b, 9b) as well as prophetic announcement of salvation (1:7, 10–11). The text also employs a narrator to report literary movements or actions, setting the scene (1:2a, 3a, 6a, and 8). Prophetic Announcement is a major genre. It is clear that the text emphasizes YHWH's announcement of judgement by using symbolic names of Hosea's children. This speech style is one of essential elements of prophetic announcement of punishment. Hosea follows YHWH's instruction. Moreover, YHWH's statement of the reasons for the punishment as the basic components again appears in text several times (2b<sup>8-13</sup>, 4b–5, 6b–7, 9b).

Hos 1:2 serves as the setting of the prophetic announcement. Hos 1:2a functions as the introduction of YHWH's presence by using prophetic word formula (*Wortereignisformel*, *Offenbarungsformel*): “the word of YHWH came to X.” This formula usually includes the name of the prophet or a pronoun suffix that refers to the prophet. Hos 1:2b serves as the first act of the story. After verse 2a places a prophetic announcement setting, verse 2b establishes one of the main settings of the book as it portrays YHWH giving instructions to Hosea by using the divine speech form of command. In this verse, YHWH is a speaker and the prophet is the listener whom YHWH speaks to. With the explanation of the reason following the particle conjunction, *וְ*, YHWH's command to marry a wife and have children constructs a plot tension.

Hos 1:3–1:9 constitutes its own self-contained plot which we can explain through the same four patterns of divine speech formula accompanying judgements or promise of salvation. In the first segment (Hos 1:3) of Hosea's fulfillment of YHWH's instruction, the text focuses on Hosea's faithfulness to follow the initial instruction without hesitation. The narrative does not explain any other information but simply records that Hosea has

completed what YHWH commanded. From this point, the text suspends any questions about Hosea's personal appeal or thought and focuses only upon YHWH's delivery of judgment with salvation. In the second segment through fourth (Hos 1:4–9), the text recounts the birth of Hosea's three children. After the narrative reports of Gomer's birth, each of the three segments presents divine speech: the future judgment on Israel in relation to the name of the child. The names of Hosea's children are all clearly symbolic presentations, as the names are not a normal name given to a person. Symbolic names continually develop the narrative plot tension.

Hos 2:1–2 serves as a promise of restoration for Israel and Judah. At the climax of the textual block, these verses function as the conclusion of YHWH's plan. Despite YHWH's anger toward northern Israel—the land which commits great harlotry —YHWH's final promise of salvation includes both Israel and Judah.

In addition, on the one hand, Ben Zvi reads this section as a “didactic, prophetic reading” which is meant to be read repeatedly by ancient readers as part of YHWH's own word through the prophet, Hosea.<sup>147</sup> Ben Zvi also classifies this section as a “narrative” since the text contains two main speakers, the narrator and YHWH, the basic characters of the narrative. This narrative, which suggests an odd prophetic personage and his life, is an example of a linguistic “sign-act”<sup>148</sup> and is typical of ancient prophetic reports that characterize the significance of the future reality that is proclaimed by the prophet. The prophet's personal life is a literary device used to interpret YHWH's word and reflects

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<sup>147</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 53.

<sup>148</sup> See footnote 5 in this chapter.

Judahite or Yehudite ideological position that refers why northern Israel was demolished.<sup>149</sup> On the other hand, Sweeney suggests that the text constitutes a report of YHWH's direct initiative instructions to Hosea that he should marry a woman of harlotries and have children of harlotries. Hosea's responsive actions follow through having three children and the names given work as a symbolic representation of YHWH's will.<sup>150</sup>

#### 4.3.3.4. Setting

In the history of the marriage metaphor above, it is true that a number of scholars argue that the marriage metaphor in Hos 1–3 mainly proclaims Israel's return from their apostasy against YHWH and posits that the main target of the apostasy is their religious corruption. They have tended to treat the marriage metaphor as evidence of idol worship by Israelites. In Hos 1:2–2:2, the anonymous narrator begins the story with a portrayal of YHWH's instructions to Hosea to marry a wife of harlotries and to have children with her. This narrative constructs the metaphorical portrayal of YHWH as the husband of the wife of harlotries, Israel. The relationship between YHWH and Israel is represented in the story of Hosea's marriage in which Hosea argues that Gomer/Israel is acting as a harlot. In terms of the marriage metaphor, some scholars (such as Harpers, Wolff, Mays, Jeremias, Stuart, and Davies) argue that Israel's religious setting was enculturated or influenced by old Canaanite religious practices, and Hosea, by using the marriage metaphor, effectively

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<sup>149</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 57.

<sup>150</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:13.

argues the need to reexamine Israel's religious practices and ideologies. These scholars argue the nature of the book is to claim the corruption of religious *Sitz-im-Leben*.

Hos 1:2–2:2 is addressed to the people of northern Israel in the form of oral (and later written) speech. Hosea's understanding of the political situation is that northern Israel is corrupt and endangered by the Assyrian Empire. Based on his understanding of Israel's corruption, Hosea finally concludes that the future of northern Israel is hopeless. By using the marriage motif, the text functions as a symbolic prophetic admonition. Hosea begins his work during a time when political and religious situation is viewed chaotic.

Several observations are noteworthy to consider the historical setting of this text. First, as we discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the setting of this narrative appears to be during the time of conflict between pro-Assyrian groups and anti-Assyrian groups, ca. 750-738. Historically, Hosea lived while Jeroboam II (786-746 BCE) continued his anti-Assyrian policy. The only king named in the superscription is Jeroboam II. Some scholars argue that the majority of the book of Hosea was written after the fall of northern Israel.<sup>151</sup> However, they ignore the primary audience, the Israelites, addressed by Hosea. The time period I propose is suitable and accordingly explains the concern of Hosea indicated in the text. According to Sweeney, Hosea's prophecy began during the time of King Jeroboam II, when "the future of Israel's foreign alliances was the subject of intense

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<sup>151</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*; Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*; Yee, "Hosea"; Emmerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*; Wöhrle, "No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones"; Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea*.

debate.”<sup>152</sup> As Sweeney indicates, the prophet observes problems under the vassal relationship with Assyria. After King Jeroboam II, the history of northern Israel is an obviously chaotic and violent period. Zechariah, the fifth king and the last monarch in the house of Jehu, supports alliance with Assyria. He was assassinated by Shallum son of Jabesh because Shallum presumably attempted to change Israel’s political relations “from alliance with Assyria to alliance with Aram.”<sup>153</sup> Hosea’s anti-Assyrian appeal seems to consider in the leadership of northern Israel. However, after only one month of his reign, Shallum was assassinated by Menahem (745-738 BCE), an army general, whose vision is to return to the pro-Assyrian policy. In 2 Kgs 15, we are told that Menahem reestablished relationships with Assyria. He continued to maintain the pro-Assyrian policy and his successor, Pekahiah (738-737 BCE), maintained it during his reign as well. Then, Pekahiah was assassinated by Pekah (737-732 BCE) who formed the Syro-Ephraimitic alliance with Rezin of Aram-Damascus. The alliance between Aram and Israel was designed to challenge Assyria and basically free Israel from Assyrian control so that they could retain Aram as their major ally, going back to the foreign policy of the house of Omri. This Syro-Ephraimitic alliance is the main power movement in which Pekah breaks the long historical relationship with Assyria as a vassal and reforms the former relationship with Aram against Assyria. As a result of that coalition, Israel and Aram eventually invade Judah during the days of Isaiah, the prophet. That is because these two countries need all small, nearby countries to come together to oppose Assyrian. However, in Jotham’s view, he remembers the event that during the time of the house of Omri,

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<sup>152</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:5.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

Arameans killed Ahab and his son, Jehoram, was wounded. Moreover, after Jehu had power, Arameans invaded and conquered Israel. Jotham does not want to join into the coalition. Therefore, the first target of the Syro-Ephraimitic alliance was Judah, which did not join into their alliance, possibly aware of upcoming Assyrian power. In Isa 7, Jotham's son Ahaz has been threatened by the invasion so he calls Tiglath-Phileser III help him to defend Judah. The result was unfortunately the failure of the alliance, which ultimately led Israel to the demolition of the kingdom by Assyrian forces despite the surrender of King Hoshea (732-722 BCE). The prophet Hosea actively engaged in this political discussion which began under the rule of Jeroboam II and continued on. Hosea's appeal would be the background of Shallum's revolt. There is also the possibility that Pekah was influenced by the prophet.<sup>154</sup> However, Shallum only sat on the throne for one month and was then dispatched by the next King Menahem, who ruled for ten years before he achieved any political change (2 Kgs 15:10–14). Menahem's bloody activity was quite serious as he killed even pregnant women if they did not support him (2Kgs 15:16). 2 Kgs 15:17–20 obviously reports that Menahem continued to support Assyria as a vassal. Within this context, Hosea's prophetic activity may not be safe, which resulted in him fleeing to the land of Judah. Therefore, some scholars' opinion that Hosea pointedly mentions about Syro-Ephraimite war in the text is not convincing as Hosea's activity was actually to appeal for his vision that Israel's relationship with Assyria will be

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<sup>154</sup> According to Sweeney, Hosea's proclamation might have influenced part of the background against Shallum or Pekah who assassinated their predecessors to return to anti-Assyrian policy. In addition, Hosea's support for Shallum or Pekah would force Hosea to leave his country when they were assassinated by their successors who again renewed the pro-Assyrian policy. *Ibid.*, 1:4–5.

harmful.<sup>155</sup> For Hosea, Pekah's political position and military alliance with Aram is what Hosea consistently asserts, and in fact, his vision comes true during that time.<sup>156</sup>

Second, the setting of the text is obviously when Hosea feels the emergent need of political change. Hosea was actively engaging his ministry during the time when Israel's political situation was complicated due to the political power shift and dynamics of other countries around Israel. Based on the analysis of chapter three, the historical setting behind this text provides how Hosea understands the political situation of northern Israel. Hosea represents the symbolic actions or intentions through the word of YHWH in the world. The first action is to marry the wife of harlotries, working as a design of a family, possibly a recurring theme motivated by treaty and covenant relations in the ancient texts which express love language in the political setting. The following actions are to have Hosea's children; each child represents the setting of the text. Sweeney mentions that the symbolic naming of children is typical expression to support symbolic acts: Isaiah's sons Shear Jashub means "a remnant shall return" (Isa 7:3–9; 10:20–23); Immanuel means "God is with us" (Isa 7:10–17; 8:5–10); Maher-shalal-hash-baz means "the spoil speeds the prey hastens" (Isa 8:1–4); and Ichabod, the grandson of the high priest Eli at Shiloh,

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<sup>155</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*; Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*; Emmerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Sweeney argues that Hosea's accusation focuses on the Jehu dynasty, thinking that a much later period when the Assyrians actually attacked would be not applicable. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:4.

means “no glory” (1 Sam 4:19–22).<sup>157</sup> Based on the children’s names, the text implies the various reflections of Hosea’s setting.

As discussed in chapter three, the Ancient Near East materials prove that the Jehu dynasty observes pro-Assyrian policy after the overthrow of the Omride dynasty in the Jezreel valley, as their political policy was clearly anti-Assyria. Hosea harshly accuses Jehu of the blood purge in the Jezreel valley because the power of the throne of kings in Hosea’s time has been all obtained and inherited from the revolt of King Jehu. In Hos 1:4–5, YHWH commands Hosea to name his first son “Jezreel” because YHWH will “take vengeance on the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.” Based on the account in 2 Kgs 9–10, the prophet Elisha makes one of his students anoint Jehu son of Jehoshaphat as an Israelite king in the inner chamber of Ramoth-gilead. The following command toward Jehu, who just became a king of Israel, is to strike down the house of his master Ahab to gain revenge on Jezebel who killed the prophets and the servants of YHWH. Joram was in Jezreel to heal his wound received from the battle against Aram. Jehu drove his chariot and went to Jezreel, where Joram was in rest, and assassinated Joram, Joram’s cousin King Ahaziah ben Jehoshaphat of Judah, and Joram’s mother Jezebel. Jehu further sent a letter to Samaria in order to threaten the governor and leaders of the city, asking for the murder of the seventy sons of King Ahab. The seventy sons were killed by Jehu’s supporters confirming that the leaders of the city obey the word of Jehu. Hosea has a very different view from the prophet

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 1:13.



Elisha and Elijah who obviously support King Jehu.<sup>158</sup> Hosea clearly condemns the Jehu dynasty as he identifies that Assyria will bring the kingdom of Israel to an end.

Third, the understanding of the social setting of Hosea's family is required as a vehicle in order to deliver prophetic messages. In Hos 1: 2bβ, YHWH asks Hosea to take for himself "a wife of harlotries," and in the same way, "children of harlotries." The reason why Hosea takes such a woman is indicated after the particle conjunction, *ki*, namely because "the land commits great harlotry" which forsakes YHWH. In this metaphoric image, a wife represents the land which commits great harlotry and so becomes "a wife of harlotries." Then, it is "a wife," who becomes "a wife of harlotries," before the wife commits great harlotries. Therefore, "a wife" and "harlotries" are different entities. Scholars, such as Harper, defend Hosea's moral difficulties on Gomer's adultery, believing that the adultery was not discovered until after his marriage.<sup>159</sup> Harper's argument focuses on Gomer's adultery, which is not certain. According to Sweeney, ancient understanding of "a wife of harlotries" is different than a general modern understanding. He argues that Gomer's harlotry does not mean that she performs a moral crime or she lacks a moral character. In ancient Israel, a woman who does not have support from her husband or relatives should support herself through whatever means were available to her.<sup>160</sup> Such activities would be weaving, nursing, innkeeping, or prostitution, etc. Therefore, what Sweeney argues is that a wife of harlotries is a

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<sup>158</sup> For the study of the differences of the theological and political viewpoints between the prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah as well as Hosea and Elisha, see *Ibid.*, 1:17–18.

<sup>159</sup> Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 208–210.

<sup>160</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:15.

theological reflection of the writer if the writer regards her as a harlot. Based on this social circumstance and discussion, my approach differs from other earlier scholars. As Sweeney argues, the term, “whoredom,” is not quite applicable to a woman whose income source is a prostitution. Rather, it is possible that we may read the two different entities, wife and harlotries, as representing different concepts.

I propose that whoredom (plural form in the biblical text) represents a symbol of false relationship, a source of YHWH’s anger, namely “by turning away from YHWH” (1:2). The combined Hebrew prepositions, **מֵאֲרָץ**, is usually translated as “turn away from something.” This is used for designating an action in a relationship or a geographic location. In the metaphor in Hos 1:2, the wife represents the land. But, since the subject is the land, how can the land commit great harlotry? What does “the land commits great harlotry” mean? This double metaphor needs to be interpreted in two steps such as the chain: the wife-the land-Israel. Then, what about the wife of harlotries? harlotries (wife)-great harlotry (land)-false relationship (Israel). The analysis of the political situation of this time provides a better sense of Hosea’s intention.

Fourth, the text features various political or military words that other marriage metaphors do not generally use. The war-related terms are: in 1:1, 4, **הָאָרֶץ** (the land) ; in 1:4, **דָּם** (blood) ; 1:5, **קֶשֶׁת** (bow) ; 1:7, **בְּקֶשֶׁת וּבַחֶרֶב וּבַמִּלְחָמָה בְּסוּסִים וּבַפָּרָשִׁים** (by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen), etc. In terms of these specific characters throughout the text in Hos 1, Hosea’s marriage metaphor is easily viewed as a unique narrative that indicates Hosea’s special concern about Israel’s political agenda. Dearman argues that the book of Hosea exclusively displays “the political designations of Israel and Judah and related household terminology.” For example, Israel (25 times), Ephraim

(34 times), Jacob, my people, Samaria, Judah, the house of Jehu, the house of the king, the house of YHWH, Land of YHWH, children of harlotries, descendants of Israel and Judah, children of living God, husband, father, groom, shepherd, and animal husbandry. Dearman believes that these literary expressions of Hosea are his conceptual symbols of thought, and Hosea relates these elements shaping “his critique of religious practice, social structure, and political relations.”<sup>161</sup> In other words, the interest of the text is safely inferred by the various but focused word choices.

Based on these four observations, it is certain that Hosea was appealing his political viewpoint toward the leadership of northern Israel because he felt that Assyria would become a future threat to push Israel to an end. His visionary experience about the marriage claims that the current situation of northern Israel is on the road to collapse due to the rulers who concluded a vassal treaty with Assyria.

### *Marriage Motif*

The study of the social-political setting of this time period provides another argument that Hosea consistently speaks to the audience by using a rhetorical literary device, namely the marriage motif practiced in the ancient world. I argue that while proclaiming the prophetic announcement, Hosea cleverly expresses his political agenda as well in the text by using the marriage motif. In verse 1:2b, the text reads, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotries and have children of harlotries.” The marriage motif appears in a command of YHWH, “take to yourself a wife of harlotries.” It is of note that YHWH does not ask Hosea’s own idea or personal favorite. Rather, there is only a command. The

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<sup>161</sup> Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 48–50.

question why YHWH commands Hosea to marry is generally understood to construct a metaphor. Then, the question is what image or stage does the metaphor express/imply? As discussed in the section of the political readings of the marriage motif, several scholars already proposed that the love and its related concept of marriage parallels the political language grounded in the treaty and covenant relationship. The literary setting that the text constructs in terms of the political language we discussed above is to create and establish a current political relationship about which Hosea is deeply concerned. Namely, northern Israel's misconduct to effectuate the treaty relationship with Assyria, initiated by King Jehu, appears in the beginning of the text block, associated with the marriage motif.

In his book, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery*, Richtsje Abma lists the marriage terms in Hos 1–3.<sup>162</sup> He finds:

אהב (to love) מאהב (lover)	3:1 2:7, 9, 12, 14, 15	נאף (to commit adultery) נאפופים (adultery)	3:1 2:4
בעל (husband)	2:18	איש (man, husband) אשה (woman, wife)	2:4, 9, 12, 18 1:2; 2:4
ארש (to become engaged)	2:21, 22	ברית (covenant)	2:20
זנה (to commit harlotry) זנונים (harlotries)	1:2; 2:7; 3:3 1:2; 2:4, 6		

<sup>162</sup> Richtsje Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery* (Isaiah 50:1-3 and 54:1-10, Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 2-3) (The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1999).

For Abma, the term ‘marriage imagery’ can be used in various situations, creating various sub-forms of metaphorical speech. This flexibility appears in different notions as divorce, adultery, promiscuity, love, and a renewed commitment, which come to the fore within the literary setting of marriage imagery. Thus, the marriage imagery is a “root metaphor that can be elaborated in various directions” and finally occurs in several forms of metaphorical speech.<sup>163</sup> The terms listed in Hos 1–3 suggests such a focused metaphor filled with the marriage motif in ancient texts.

Another metaphorical interpretation of the same text is possible. In Hos 1:2, the reason that YHWH commands/instructs Hosea to marry a wife and have children is because the land commits great harlotry. The narrator carefully utilizes the marriage motif, assigning that Gomer reflects Assyria which Hosea criticizes in nature. Hosea reflects Israel, which commits great harlotry by marrying Gomer, the origin of the sinful apostasy of the Israelites. The motif speaks of a relationship between sovereign and vassal. When the narrator constructs a marriage relationship by the command of YHWH, “marry a woman of harlotries,” he prepares a metaphorical setting of the current situation, describing that Israel commits a great harlotry. By establishing Gomer as Assyria and Hosea as Israel, the text suggests the current relationship and political status to create the setting of the marriage metaphor.

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 3.

#### 4.3.3.5. Intention

The history of scholarship of the marriage metaphor suggests that the religious reading and political reading of the marriage metaphor communicate together based on the characters in the text and their relationship represented. On the one hand, Hosea's marriage narrative speaks about Israel's infidelity to YHWH. Hosea portrays his relationship with his wife Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, as a paradigm for the relationship of YHWH and Israel in which God is the husband and Israel is the wife. The narrative portrays Gomer as a faithless wife. She is going out after other men/other lovers, so Hosea condemns her and divorces her. Likewise, YHWH portrays Israel as YHWH's bride and because she is going after other gods, YHWH will bring punishment upon her for being faithless. This paradigm has been used as a standard, as to accuse women of infidelity is to accuse Israel of infidelity. Against this main line, various feminist critics have complained about the nature of the exclusively masculine in this perspective of these chapters. Francis Landy especially argues that in these chapters, Gomer never speaks and the narrative constructs the character of Gomer through Hosea's depiction of her.<sup>164</sup> Such feminist readings require a fundamental reinterpretation of the book of Hosea.

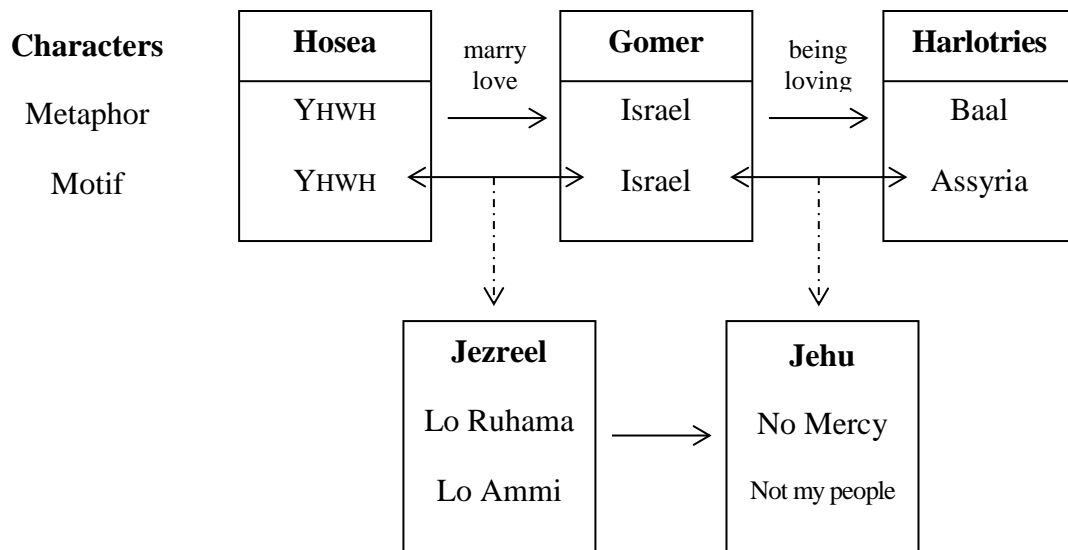
On the other hand, the context of the word, love, in Assyrian treaties is discussed above. When these treaties speak about two kings who love each other, it does not mean that the kings are lovers in the modern sense; rather, it means that they form a treaty relationship. They speak about that relationship in terms of, "I love my brother, I love my

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<sup>164</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 31, 35.

father,” describing the hierarchy. Love is one of those words that comes into treaty language frequently. Moran argues that the concept of love of God in Deuteronomy is similar to the ancient treaty language and that love is used in a political context. According to McCarthy, many biblical texts show similar political language and motifs to the treaty text, especially texts in relation to the marital language and marriage relationships. The language and relationship in the book of Hosea are metaphorical representations. Mostly, the tenor of the metaphor is YHWH’s relationship with Israel, and the vehicle of it is Hosea’s marriage to Gomer. The key language of love/marriage appears in Hos 1:2–9. For example, in verse 2, “Go! Take a woman of harlotries (זנויות) and children of harlotries.”

Based on the analysis of the marriage motif in the ancient world, the image of a conjugal relationship represents the political relationship. The portrayal of YHWH’s command for Hosea to be a husband of the wife of harlotries represents Hosea’s criticism of the political situation. Israel is allied with Assyria which is, in Hosea’s view, a whoredom, the country which gradually ruins Israel. The structure of the marriage motif in the text follows:



In this diagram, there are specific characters that the marriage metaphor utilizes: Hosea as the main character; Gomer as a woman of harlotries; harlotry is viewed as a status or a character in the narrative as it is evaluated in two different ways--status of harlotry or not; and lastly, children of harlotries as representation of symbolic entities/punishment.

These characters are working devices in the marriage metaphor. First of all, Hosea is commanded to marry Gomer by YHWH. Hosea represents YHWH, and Gomer represents Israel which is described as being a harlot, namely, seeking false Baal worship, and loving Baal who once provided oil and bread. Within this married/related participations, three children are born, representing three distinctive characters in the metaphor: Jezreel provides for the background of the punishment; Lo-Ruhama represents YHWH's intention to the people because of the relationship between Gomer and harlotries; and lastly, Lo-Ammi represents another of YHWH's intention to the people because of the continuing relationship.



The marriage motif suggests that the narrative reveals and criticizes the political situation of northern Israel. Gomer loves Baal, indicating she is being a harlot. In other words, Israel as a vassal loves Assyria (illicit foreign ruler) and this relationship leads to YHWH's punishment. YHWH shames the false relationship between Gomer and Baal through the symbolic names of her children with Hosea. The first son is named Jezreel, as YHWH wants to reveal the origin of the whole trouble. Jezreel is where Jehu overthrew the Omride dynasty and set his own throne over northern Israel. Jehu's pro-Assyrian policy is the target of the marriage motif. Consequences are predicted through the second and third children born to Gomer (Israel): YHWH will show no mercy (Lo-Ruhamah) and the Israelite is not YHWH's people (Lo-Ammi). The marriage motif in this structure or metaphor indicates that Hosea politically claims that the pro-Assyrian policy, made and began from King Jehu, is not the way YHWH wants Israel to continue.

Following literary presentations also support this image of the marriage motif. In Hos 1:2b, the imperative verb, לקח (take), generally means to marry based on the narratives in the Hebrew Bible. Based on the political reading of the marriage motif, marry/love someone represents a political relationship. Therefore, Hosea's marriage to Gomer metaphorically means that Israel is always in relation to YHWH or Israel is YHWH's nation. The narrative begins giving the whole picture of the current political situation and dynamics in Hosea's time. As I previously argued, to love/marry someone is another expression of having a relationship with someone/something in ancient treaty texts.

Considerations of textual embracement on military/political expression support the political usage of the marriage motif in treaty texts: Hos 1:4 features the blood of

Jezreel which YHWH will intend to pay back to the house of Jehu. The end of a kingdom sounds very military expression; in Hos 1:5, the text mentions the bow of Israel, which is deeply related with political/military expression; in Hos 1:7, the text frequently indicates the saving plan of YHWH and lists military weapons such as a bow, a sword, a horse, and a horseman in a war situation.

The marriage motif in Hos 1:2–2:2 obviously points out that the marriage relations in the text are used to express the political situation. Hosea proclaims his political agenda along with the marriage metaphor, which accuses the Israelites of religious apostasy. Moreover, the relationship with Assyria will be a disaster for northern Israel. The book is intended to ask the Israelites to reflect upon the relation between YHWH and Israel and urge them to recover the relationship.

#### 4.3.4. Hosea's appeal to children for their mother's return (2:3–3:5 [2:1–3:5])

##### 4.3.4.1. Translation and critical notes

<sup>3</sup>Say to your brothers, "*Ammi*,"

and to your sisters, "*Ruhamah*."

<sup>4</sup>Contend with your mother! Contend! For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. And let her take away her harlotries from her face<sup>165</sup>, and her adulteries from her breasts.

<sup>5</sup>Lest I strip her naked and expose her as on the day she was born and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a dry land, and I kill her with thirst. <sup>6</sup>And I will have no

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<sup>165</sup>The Leningrad Codex and multiple manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible include נִי. The meaning is unaffected. We should maintain the MT.

compassion on her children, for they are children of harlotries. <sup>7</sup>For their mother has committed harlotry, the one who conceived them has put to shame. For she said:

*“I will go after my lovers, giving to me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.”*

<sup>8</sup>Therefore, I will hedge up her way<sup>166</sup> with thorns, and I will build up a wall so she will find her paths. <sup>9</sup>And she shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them. And she shall seek them, but not find<sup>167</sup> them. Then she will say,

*“I will go and return to my former husband, for it was better for me then than now.”*

<sup>10</sup>She did not know that I gave to her the grain and the new wine and the oil, and that I multiplied silver for her, yet the gold they fashioned for Baal.<sup>168</sup> <sup>11</sup>Therefore, I will take back my grain in its time, the new wine in its season. I will remove my wool and my flax which were to cover her nakedness. <sup>12</sup>Now, I will uncover her shameful deeds<sup>169</sup> before the eyes of her lovers, and no one shall deliver her from my hand. <sup>13</sup>I will put to an end all her rejoicing, her festivals, her new moons and Sabbaths, and all her appointed festivals. <sup>14</sup>I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees of which she said:

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<sup>166</sup>The LXX and Peshitta read דָּרְכֶיהָ, since 3fs is used for suffix pronouns of nouns throughout the rest of the verse.

<sup>167</sup>The LXX and Peshitta add αὐτοὺς. Since this meaning seems implied in the context (she is seeking the lovers), LXX is preferred.

<sup>168</sup>BHS proposes that “I multiplied silver for her, yet the gold they fashioned for Baal” is a later insertion. It is possible that the use of the third masculine plural and the singular form of Baal are for emphasis. Although the passage has been using the third feminine plural to refer to the wife of harlotries, it is metaphorically speaking about the people of Israel. Baal is also the “lover” within the metaphor. Since there is no textual evidence to the contrary, MT is preferred.

<sup>169</sup>The term נִבְלָתָהּ is a *hapax legomenon*. As pointed out by Macintosh, it may be a variant form of lbn and may therefore be translated as “senseless folly.” This translation fits the context of the illicit sexual behavior seen in 2 Sam. 13:2 and Gen 34:7. Cf. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 59.

*“These are my harlot’s wages<sup>170</sup> which my lovers have given to me. I will make them into a forest and the wild animals will devour them.”*

<sup>15</sup>So I will punish her for the days of the Baals when she offer sacrifices<sup>171</sup> to them, decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers; but she forgot me, utterance of YHWH. <sup>16</sup>Therefore, I will entice her. I will bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her heart. <sup>17</sup>Then I will give her from there her vineyards and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope. There she shall respond as in the days of her youth, when she came up from the land of Egypt. <sup>18</sup>And it shall come to pass in that day, utterance of YHWH, you will call<sup>172</sup> me “*My husband*,” and you will no longer call me “*My baal*.” <sup>19</sup>And I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth and they will no longer be mentioned by their name. <sup>20</sup>And I will make for them a covenant on that day, with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground. I will abolish bow, sword, and war from the land. I will make them lie down in safety. <sup>21</sup>And I will betroth you to myself forever. I will betroth you to myself with in righteousness and in justice, in loyalty and in compassion. <sup>22</sup>I will betroth you to myself in faithfulness and you shall know<sup>173</sup> Yahweh. <sup>23</sup>And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, utterance of YHWH. I will answer the heavens, and they will answer the earth. <sup>24</sup>The earth shall answer the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel. <sup>25</sup>And I will sow her for myself in the land, and I will have compassion on Lo-Ruhamah, and I will say to Lo-Ammi: “*You are my people!*”

And he will say: “*My God!*”

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<sup>170</sup> The term נָחֳמִי is a *hapax legomenon*. Cf. Ibid., 63.

<sup>171</sup> Wolf notes that the piel form is consistent with prophetic usage of the verb: 4:13, 11:2, Amos 4:5; Jer 1:16; 11:17; 18:15. Wolff, *Hosea*, 31.

<sup>172</sup> LXX (καλέσει με), Peshitta, and Vulgate use the third person singular form of the verb. Once again, the change in person from the metaphorical context to a direct address to Israel gives emphasis to the climactic statement. This leads me to choose MT.

<sup>173</sup> Multiple manuscripts and Vulgate read יָדָעַי. Wolff notes this reading may be influenced by Ezekiel. Cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, 46. This also may be a difficult reading for the scribe who might not accept the idea of “knowing” Yahweh.

<sup>3</sup>And YHWH said to me,

*“Go again, love a woman being loved by her companion<sup>174</sup> and commits adultery, even as YHWH loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.”*

<sup>2</sup>So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a half of barley.

<sup>3</sup>And I said to her,

*“You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; so I will also be toward you.”*

<sup>4</sup>For the children of Israel remain for many days without kin or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar and without ephod or household idols. <sup>5</sup>Afterwards the sons of Israel will return and seek the YHWH, their God and David, their king; and they will come trembling to YHWH and to his goodness in the last days.

#### 4.3.4.2. Structure

The Structure of Hos 2:3–3:5 [2:1–3:5]  
Hosea’s appeal to children for their mother’s return:  
restoration of united people under Davidic monarch

I. The Speech of Hosea to His Children	2:3
A. Restoration of Hosea’s sons	3a
B. Restoration of Hosea’s daughter	3b
II. Hosea’s appeal for his wife to return	2:4–25
A. Appeal to the children for their mother’s return	2:4–7
1. Dispute of their mother’s whore	4

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<sup>174</sup> LXX translates it as “evil things” based on רָעָה. NIV and ESV choose “another man.” NRSV proposes “a lover.” However, the term רָעָה means “friend, companion, or fellow.”

2. Metaphorical representation of the mother's future	5
3. Dispute of the children of harlots	6
4. Accusation of the mother's shameful behavior	7
B. Consequences of the appeal	8–17
1. First set of consequences ("therefore")	8
2. Second set of consequences ("therefore")	11
3. Third set of consequences ("therefore")	16
C. YHWH's restoration of Hosea's family members	18–25
1. Restoration of the wife ("and it shall come to pass in that day")	18–22
2. Restoration of the children ("and it shall come to pass in that day")	23–25
III. Autobiographical report concerning Hosea's remarriage	3:1–5
A. Narrative account of YHWH's instruction to Hosea: Marry a woman who has a lover	1
B. Report of Hosea's compliance and appeal to future restoration	2–5
1. Hosea's fulfillment of YHWH's instruction	2–3
2. Restoration of the Israelite and David, their king	4–5

\*Based on MT

In the main body of the book of Hosea (1:2–14:9), Hos 2:3–3:5 [2:1–3:5] serves as the first subsection within the second major section which is a "Narrative account of Hosea's speeches: appeal for Israel's return (2:3–14:9)." This second major section contains four distinctive narrative reports spoken by the prophet, Hosea. Therefore, it obviously differs from the first major section in Hos 1:2–2:2, in which the speaker was a narrator. Hos 2:3–3:5 is also the second part of the marriage metaphor in discussion. Therefore, detailed form critical analysis is required in this study.

The basic structure of this passage is determined by the distinction between the discourse language in Hos 2:3–25 and the narrative language in Hos 3:1–5. Both units are

Hosea's speech and through different tone and style, both attempt to appeal the emergent repentance of Israel's apostasy against YHWH as well as recovery from the sinful relationship with Assyria as the basis for the announcements of judgment against them, prospecting Israel's ideal future. The two parts of the passage work together insofar as the descriptive discourse, rhetorical appeal for judgment, and YHWH's restoration in Hos 2:3–25 lead the audience into self-reflection. The narrative of YHWH's promise of restoration of Hos 3:1–5 likewise reinforces the previous plot by linking the ideal future of Hosea's family and kingdom under King David.

Hos 2:3–3:5 begins with the speech of Hosea in the first person narrating Hosea's appeal to his children for their mother's return and ends with the promise of restoration of a united people under a Davidic monarch. The imperative verbs, אָמַר, in Hos 2:3 [2:1], and שָׁמַע, in 4:1, obviously indicate whom the speaker addresses, providing the literary beginning mark of each subsection. Moreover, in Hos 2:3–3:5, Hosea is speaking to his family members whereas Hos 4:1 changes the addressee to the Israelites. Such change of the addressee points out that these two texts are separated textual blocks. Indeed, on the one hand, Hos 2:3 is clearly not addressed to Hosea while 1:9–2:2 is the instruction by YHWH to Hosea. On the other hand, scholars attempt to separate chapter three from the previous chapters (Hos 1–2). However, the waw consecutive in the first imperative verb in Hos 3:1 indicates that the textual block is a continuing speech of the prophet Hosea. Thus, the literary features such as pronouns and waw consecutive provide for the demarcation of the structure in this section as Hos 2:3–3:5.

The unit shows a clear and well-organized structure. As an introductory speech, Hosea designates his children as to whom he is speaking. The text moves into Hosea's

appeal for his wife to return that includes an appeal to the children for their mother's return, consequences of the appeal, and YHWH's restoration of Hosea's family members. These prophetic explanations are addressed to his children in the discourse form. As expected in the prophetic books, the unit constructs a plot from accusing his wife's shameful behaviors, then moves to construct an image of restoration reflected in various names that each character calls the other, such as "my husband," "my bride," "my people," and "my God." Finally, through the autobiographical narrative, Hosea is commanded to remarry a woman and the instruction of YHWH is given to Hosea, who will accomplish the promise of restoration.

In Hos 2:3, Hosea calls for the attention of his children by using the imperative form. The indication of Hosea's speech after the narrator's report of YHWH's instruction in Hos 1:2–2:2 is clear in his statement in verse 4, "for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband." Thus, Hos 2:3 is the first point where the speaker is changed, and giving new names for the children begins a new section block.

In Hos 2:4–25, Hosea's speech in discourse style shows the features of the prophetic book, such as prophetic judgment and restoration. First of all, the structure of Hos 2:4–7 is determined by a combination of the contents and the identity of the speaker. Hosea appeals to the children for their mother's return. Such an appeal includes disputes about Gomer's shameful behaviors of harlotries, engaging with all consequences from the relationship in the marriage as judgment. The beginning of a new subunit in Hos 2:8–25 can be securely inferred from the change of theme in Hos 2:8 as well as the continuing usage of the Hebrew term, לָכֵן (therefore). Hosea lists three sets of consequences by using the term in the beginning of each set: Hos 2:8–10, 11–15, and 16–17. Accordingly, the



boundaries of the unit (Hos 2:18–25) is demarcated by the speech formula, “and it shall come to pass in that day,” in 2:18 as well as the formula in 2:23 that reports YHWH’s restoration of Hosea’s family members.

Hos 3:1–5 features an autobiographical report concerning Hosea’s remarriage. This section is clearly demarcated by YHWH’s speech in 3:1 that introduces the reported new command and Hosea’s compliance with appeal to future restoration (Hos 3:2–5). Furthermore, the second report can be divided into two different themes: “Hosea’s fulfillment of YHWH’s instruction” and “Restoration of the Israelites and David, their king.” Another considering aspect of the structure is “utterance of YHWH” in Hos 2:15, 18, and 23. Ben Zvi believes that the expression appears in a non-final position and in this case, the expression conveys “stress and legitimacy to the text” but does not serve as “a major macrosyntactical marker.”<sup>175</sup> Thus, the stress of YHWH’s speech is not related to the construction of the structure.

#### 4.3.4.3. Genre

The literary genre employed in Hos 2 is discourse style, while Hos 3 is narrative. With these two different styles, the unit presents a “Didactic, Prophetic Announcement” which includes “Prophetic Judgment against the People” as well as “Prophetic Announcement of Salvation” in order to emphasize the promise of the future of Israel and the reconstruction of Israel’s history through the marriage metaphor. After Hos 1:2–2:2 establishes one of the main characters and one of the main settings of the book by placing

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<sup>175</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 64.

Hosea in a family setting which includes a wife of harlotries and children of harlotries, Hos 2:3–3:5 turns to Hosea’s appeal to recover his family relationship by using a plot tension, depicting illicit behaviors of the wife and children, as the main focus of punishment, as well as Hosea’s reconciliation of the relationship with himself and the other family members. In particular, Hos 2 contains a discourse in imperative mode that offers guidance to his children by setting forth prescriptions to their mother’s return.

Hos 2:3–3:5 is a composite unit whose generic character is determined by the discourse arrangement of its constituent subunits. In its present form, this passage displays two generic patterns. The first pattern is that of “Prophetic Judgment Speech” against the children’s mother/Israel. The second pattern is that of the “Prophetic Announcement of Salvation” concerning Hosea’s remarriage followed by future restoration. Hos 2:3–25 contains the standard elements of this genre: 1) call to attention (v. 3); 2) a statement of the reasons for judgment (vv. 4–7); 3) a logical connector (לָכֵן, “therefore,” in vv. 8–17); and 4) an announcement of future restoration (וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא, “it shall come to pass in that day,” in vv. 18–25; 3:4–5).

There are several points of consideration in the literary features and characteristics of subunit’s genre as “Prophetic Announcement.” First, in Hos 2:8, 11, 16, the Hebrew term, לָכֵן, “therefore,” provides consequences of judgement, which is used for “Prophetic Judgment Speech.” In general, the “Prophetic Judgement Speech” includes a statement of the reasons for judgment, with a logical transition following by using such a formula, and a prophetic announcement of punishment.<sup>176</sup> Hosea first presents the

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<sup>176</sup> Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 533.

prophetic announcement of punishment in Hos 2:5–6, “I strip her naked and expose her as on the day she was born...” The statement of the reasons for judgment appears in Hos 2:7, “For their mother has committed harlotry, the one who conceived them has put to shame...” The consequences followed by the transitional formula, “therefore,” appear in Hos 2:8, 11, and 16: “Therefore, I will hedge up her way...,” “Therefore, I will take back my grain...,” and “Therefore, I will entice her...”

Moreover, “Prophetic Judgment Speech” used to appear with “Messenger Speech.” According to Sweeney, the “Messenger Speech” is the message that is “delivered by a messenger” and that takes “the form of a direct speech by the sender.”<sup>177</sup> Sweeney acknowledges that by using the messenger formula, “the person who delivers the message speaks on behalf of the sender.”<sup>178</sup> The messenger formula in Hos 2:3–3:5 is especially interesting in that the speaker of the message is not definable. Sweeney mentions:

It would seem initially that the passage conveys Hosea’s appeals to his children to assist in calling for the mother’s return from her other lovers. But as the passage progresses, it becomes clear from the oracular formula in Hos 2:15 [NRSV:2:13] and the contents of Hos 2:16–25 [NRSV: 2:14–23] that the prophet conveys YHWH’s words addressed to Israel.<sup>179</sup>

In other words, the text begins with the prophet’s judgment speech and later transforms to the messenger speech, delivering YHWH’s direct message to the readers.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 524.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:27.

Second, the oracular formula, נְאֻם־יְהוָה (utterance of YHWH), occurs in Hos 2:15, 18, and 23. This formula generally represents a word of God in a “Prophetic Speech.” The formula appears in various places in sentences such as at the beginning of a prophetic speech (Hos 2:15) or in the middle of a prophetic speech (2:18, 23). As discussed above in messenger formula, Sweeney argues that the oracular formula, used while Hosea is speaking to his children, indicates that YHWH comes to the front as a speaker.<sup>180</sup> The first use of the oracular formula (2:15) belongs to the “Prophetic Judgment Speech” and the next two uses of the formula (2:18, 23) belong to the “Prophetic Announcement of Salvation.” For Westermann, the basic pattern of the “Prophetic Announcement of Salvation” includes a proclamation of deliverance followed by a blessing (e.g. Hos 2:16-19). Westermann argues that the history of the expression of the salvation is based on the promise of future events.

Third, the phrase, וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא (it shall come to pass in that day), used in Hos 2:18, 23, is one of the characteristic prophetic formulae and usually announces the beginning of a “Prophetic Announcement” concerning some future event.<sup>181</sup> The combination of this formula, along with the oracular formula, “utterance of YHWH,” features the prophetic orientation of this textual block.

Fourth, Hosea continues to speak in Hos 3:1–5, pointing out that YHWH has given him another instruction-- to marry a woman--in the first verse. The formula, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי (YHWH said to me), is “Instruction,” which is a writing in imperative form which offers a

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 1:35.

<sup>181</sup> Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 544.

guideline to an individual or group by “setting forth particular values or prescribing rules of conduct.”<sup>182</sup> For Sweeney, the prophetic “Instruction” focuses on specific conduct with persuasive purposes, focusing on the ultimate goal which is continued adherence to YHWH, who will provide assurance of Israel’s prosperity.<sup>183</sup>

These textual features clearly convey a message about the genre of this section. The prophetic message and its various rhetorical formulae evidently inform the genre of this section, therefore emphasizing Hosea’s prophetic message. Ben Zvi emphasizes the book of Hosea’s function as a didactic book. He argues that this book is “meant to be read and reread by ancient readers and that claims it should be read as part of YHWH’s word.”<sup>184</sup> Sweeney reads Hosea as a prophetic speech with metaphorical character so as to appeal to the people of Israel envisioning “a restoration of the relationship when Israel returns to the wilderness to renew the marriage/covenant as in the days of the exodus from Egypt and the wilderness period when Israel was formed as a nation.”<sup>185</sup>

#### 4.3.4.4. Setting

The setting of the writing and reading of Hos 2:3–3:5 is the same as that of the book as a whole discussed in the section above (§4.3.2. and §4.3.3.4). After the initial instruction of YHWH along with Hosea’s fulfillment of the instruction (1:2–2:2), Hosea

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 53.

<sup>185</sup> Sweeney, *Tanak*, 347.

turns to his children, accusing them of sinful behaviors and appealing for their mother's repentance. The historical setting of the prophet, Hosea, is assumed by his continuous use of the marriage metaphor in Hos 2:3–3:5, showing various concerns such as religious apostasy against YHWH, the political problem of the country based on the prophet's viewpoint, and the marriage motif which reflects Israel's situation of political alliances during the prophet's time.

Focus of Hosea's concern in this study is his reflection of the marriage motif, indicating a vassal relationship with Assyria as a problem. Several considerations of the motif along with the use of political language are noteworthy. In Hos 2:5b, Gomer states that she is going to follow her lovers because she is seeking another relationship that will provide her with bread, water, wool, flax, oil, and drink. Scholars tend to read this as Gomer following other gods for such resources. However, the marriage motif that occurs in the love relationship is clearly presented here in conjunction with the materials that imply/signify Israel's tribute in a vassal relationship or trade /commercial exchange. This is an example of the way love relationships in treaty/covenant texts provide for the material gains as well as the exchange of supplies. In Hos 2:9, Hosea claims that he will take back his grain, wine, wool, and flax, suggesting that these materials were taken. As indicated in Black Obelisk, King Jehu and followers were required to submit and pay tribute to Assyria in order to be faithful to the treaty in the way the treaty texts describe, namely, to "love master." In Hos 2:16, the text proposes Gomer's new marital relationship with YHWH/Hosea. In Hos 2:18, the military language indicates the new relationship will ensure peace such as no bow, sword, and war existing in the land and the promise of safety. In Hos 3:1, YHWH commands Hosea love a woman who loves raisin

cakes. The variation of the love relationship the text presents reflects a vassal treaty relationship. In other words, the military words and lists of product supplies are connected with Abma's argument on the marriage imagery in the text, so that the loving relationship is closely connected with socio-political dimensions.<sup>186</sup> It is arguable, therefore, that the text displays a significant interest in political representation.

#### 4.3.4.5. Intention

The main intention of Hosea's first appeal to his children for their mother's return is to persuade and communicate to the Israelites to take a careful look at their circumstances. As noted above, Hosea begins his communication rhetorically in order to raise his concerns and issues. By doing so, Hosea fundamentally criticizes Israel's problems. Besides Israel's religious apostasy against YHWH reflected in the broken relationship between Hosea and Gomer, Hosea's political argument about Israel's relationship with neighboring countries appears throughout this section. Based on the setting of this section above, the prophetic explanation of punishment shadowing the political relationship clearly sets the interpretative agenda Hosea proclaims.

Hosea's call to attention, "Say to your brothers, '*Ammi*,' and to your sisters, '*Ruhamah*,'" using an imperative form in v. 3 to address his children/Israel, functions as the marker of the beginning of this textual block. The intention of the call is for the Israelites to listen to Hosea's prophetic message. Hos 2:4–7 [2:2–5] appears to relate

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<sup>186</sup> For the discussion of Abma's argument on the marriage imagery, see footnote 162.

primarily to Hos 1:2–2:2 [1:2–25] insofar as they condemn Gomer for her harlotries as well as for her children of harlotries. Hos 2:8–17 [2:6–15] clearly renders the consequences of Hosea’s appeal/punishment by pointing to the destitute state of Gomer after Hosea/YHWH has punished her. Hos 2:18–25 [2:16–23] serves as the means for introducing 3:1–5 by mentioning the announcement of restoration in oracular formula. This passage focuses on the recovery of the woman by emphasizing the new relationship for the woman with YHWH as her HUSBAND.

In particular, Hos 2:18–22 [2:16–20] serve as the means for repeating the marriage motif presented in Hos 1:2, “Go, marry a woman of harlotries.” The statement, “you will call me ‘*My husband*,’ and you will no longer call me ‘*My baal*.’” in v. 18, is continually an object of scholarly debate. On the one hand, some scholars interpret that when אִשִּׁי is used, the expression indicates a deep and intimate relationship, whereas בַּעַל emphasizes the legal right of a husband as the possessor of the wife.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, these scholars argue that the change of the terms intentionally declares that the loving relationship between husband and wife is restored. However, Kelle disagrees when he writes, “other uses of the term in the context of intimacy, compassion, and love argue against this interpretation (e.g., 2 Sam 11:26; Isa 54:5–8; Joel 1:8).”<sup>188</sup> Yee also claims that this view

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<sup>187</sup> Mays, *Hosea*, 48; Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 124; Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 78; Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:35; Wolff, *Hosea*, 49.

<sup>188</sup> Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, 275. Cf. Emerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*, 26; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 190; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 75.



“dangerously imposes modern conceptions of marriage upon Hosea.”<sup>189</sup> On the other hand, other scholars argue that the use of the two terms indicates the existence of Baal worship among the Israelites.<sup>190</sup> These scholars accept the presence of idol worship and ignore any metaphorical representation in the terms. Kelle, who proposes these two scholarly views as invalid, argues that:

They lose sight of the metaphorical function of the term בעל in this verse in particular and in the chapter as a whole. Verse 18 should be kept within the metaphorical imagery and not extracted as a literal description. Additionally, if...the discourse of Hos 2 repeatedly draws upon the tradition in which בעל functions as a metaphorical term and denotes a political entity such as an ally or overlord, the interpretation of this verse remains unclear.

Kelle argues that Hosea’s metaphor of a wife and her lovers is the focal point of the book. Here Hosea argues that the wife must return from having many partners to having YHWH as an exclusive relationship partner.<sup>191</sup> Kelle interprets this as “the rhetorical-historical situation in which Samaria...had entered into relationships with various political allies, who represent competing loyalties to Yahweh.”<sup>192</sup>

Since the marriage metaphor mainly deals with the marriage relationship between Hosea and Gomer, YHWH as the husband of the wife creates another relationship *per se*. This conflict between YHWH and wife-Israel supports the presence of the marriage motif.

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<sup>189</sup> Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 107.

<sup>190</sup> Davies, *Hosea*, 1993, 82; Wolff, *Hosea*, 49.

<sup>191</sup> Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, 275.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

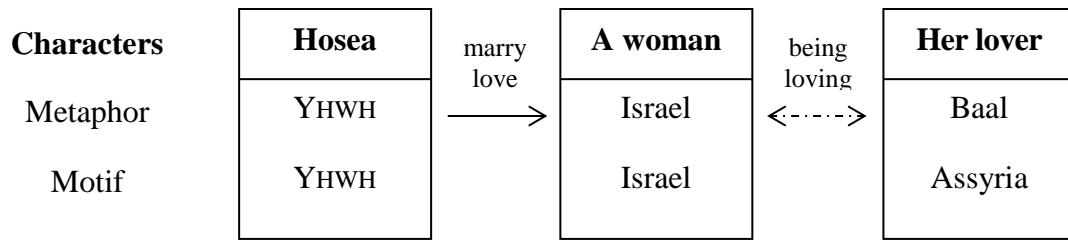
Marital relationship based on love as discussed above are deeply connected with political relationships. As Kelle also indicates when discussing the political representation of בעל in the text, Hos 2:18 considers the initial marriage motif and its political representation in Hos 1:2–2:2 and argues that Israel’s political alliance with Assyria, reflected in the marital/love relationship with Baal in v. 18, is confirmed to be false and risky. Therefore, Hosea is clearly appealing to Israel to turn back from the vassal relationship with Assyria in order to envision Israel’s ideal future. Hosea urges the Israelites to remove the names of the Baals and mention them no more in v. 19 [17]. In other words, the vassal treaty relationship with Assyria has to be terminated.

Hos 3:1 states that “Go again, love a woman being loved by her companion and commits adultery, even as YHWH loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.” The love relationship in this verse can be interpreted in two different ways:

First, as indicated in the diagram below, the characters in v. 1 are Hosea, a woman, her lover, and YHWH. Excluding YHWH as was done in the marriage metaphor in Hos 1, the vehicles of these characters would be Hosea, a woman, and her lover. The tenors of these characters would be YHWH, Israel, and Baal (worship) respectively.<sup>193</sup>

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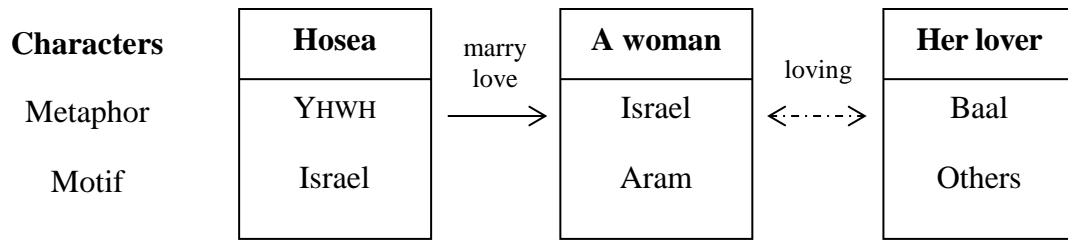
<sup>193</sup> Scholarly debate about the question whether the woman in chapter 3 is Gomer is beyond the scope of this study. For further discussion, see Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:38–39. On the contrary, cf Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 96–102.



Thus, the metaphor argues that Hosea’s marriage relationship with a woman, who committed adultery in following her companion (Baal/worship), is recovered because YHWH loves the Israelites (“*Go again, love a woman being loved by her companion and commits adultery, even as YHWH loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes*”).

Hosea appeals to those who listen to his message to repent from their wrongdoings and return to the proper relationship that is open to them, even though they have committed apostasy against YHWH. On the motif level, the love relationship in vv. 1–3 is related to the political relationship based on the vehicles of the metaphor. Frequent use of the term, “love,” with the relational concept indicates a political relationship among countries in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The motif of the metaphor in this feature, therefore, claims that Israel turns away from Assyria and that YHWH keeps his covenant with Israel.

Second, along with the same tenors and vehicles, the motif of the metaphor can be viewed differently. The second reading of the motif suggests that Israel must recover its prior relationship with Aram again, though Aram has been politically allying with other countries. Even though Aram allies with countries other than Israel, Aram is still the one Israel/YHWH loves.



Furthermore, Hos 3:2–3 argues that Israel remains in the alliance with Aram for many days and that Israel needs to offer payment or present tribute to Aram in order to recover an ideal relationship with it.

Most scholars read the metaphor in chapter 3 and see YHWH’s instructions for Hosea to repair his relationship with Gomer or another wife. However, as discussed above, another expression reflected in the statement, “buy her back,” may be interpreted as “reestablish the political relationship with Aram” or “cut off the relations with Assyria.” In addition, either understanding of Hosea’s proclamation indicates Israel’s proper relationship with foreign countries: Break the relations with Assyria and restore an ideal relationship with Aram.

Hos 3:4–5 appears to be Hosea’s political statement again. Most scholars believe that these verses are a later addition.<sup>194</sup> It is clear when we ask the question who benefits from such a statement as is in v. 5, “Afterwards the sons of Israel will return and seek the YHWH, their God and David, their king.” The house of David is obviously the benefactor in such a statement. In fact, in the aftermath of the Assyrian destruction of Israel in 722–721 BCE, King Hezekiah revolted against Assyria and part of his goal was to reestablish Davidic rule over what had been northern Israel. When Hezekiah’s revolt failed, his great

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<sup>194</sup> Sweeney, *Tanak*, 347.

grandson Josiah, likewise, attempted to extend Davidic rule over what had been northern Israel. Josiah failed as well, but the time period between Hezekiah and Josiah is the suitable historical setting for editing the book of Hosea, including statements regarding the restoration of the house of David.

#### 4.4. Concluding Remarks

A brief history of scholarship on Hos 1–3 shows that some scholars read the marriage metaphor in conjunction with various religious settings in ancient Israel. Other scholars suggest that political readings of love language speak of a covenant/vassal relationship. In addition, socio-political methods provide valuable approaches to the interpretation of the marriage metaphor based on the social problems created by elite groups which controlled economic relations.

Next, the form critical analysis of Hos 1–3 provides an exegetical basis concerning how Hosea's political agenda is reflected in the marriage metaphor by using the marriage motif, the recurring linguistic concept in terms of love in relation to the political relationships and treaties in the Ancient Near Eastern materials.

In sum, based on the various readings of Hos 1–3 as discussed, we have observed that the metaphorical representation of Israel's religious apostasy against YHWH as well as the marriage motif that reflects Hosea's political viewpoint clearly appear as focal points of the book. Given Hosea's concerns with Assyria and the house of Jehu, I argue that the book of Hosea is concerned with both religious issues and political issues. I present how the political and religious dimensions work together by comparing the

biblical text with treaty and covenant texts in Ancient Near Eastern resources. By doing so, I have suggested that the marriage motif used by Hosea in Hos 1–3 strongly delivers the political concept in the ancient world to the audiences of the text.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FORM CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PENTATEUCHAL CITATIONS IN HOS 12

### 5.1. Introduction

In addition to the marriage motif in Hos 1–3, Hos 12 decisively emphasizes Hosea's political concern through the Pentateuchal citations. Hos 12 is known for referencing Assyria as a problem. In particular, the citations of Pentateuchal traditions concerning Jacob's relationship with Aram, and Moses's relationship with Egypt, are the two key powers highlighted by Hosea as problematic. Thus, interpreters have to consider Hosea's appeal in his political viewpoint. Previously, interpreters observe that Hosea employs the traditions of northern Israel which focus on Jacob, the exodus, and wilderness, while other pre-exilic prophets are interested in the traditions of Zion and David. Scholars have discussed the origins of those traditions, asking "from where did they come and how did Hosea learn/know them?" They also propose various approaches to the function of the tradition in the book. I will discuss main scholarly analyses regarding these questions to see how scholars understand the Pentateuchal citations. Based on the form critical analysis, I will also analyze Hos 12 in order to examine how and in what ways the Pentateuchal citations play within Hosea's overall argument. Consequently, I argue that Hosea uses rhetorical skills and narrative shifts to emphasize his points. In addition, Hosea coherently proposes his argument by using didactic lessons exemplified from the traditions.

## 5.2. A Brief History of Scholarship about Pentateuchal Citations

### 5.2.1. Scholarly readings of Pentateuchal citations

#### 5.2.1.1. Gunnar Östborn, 1956

In his book, *Yahweh and Baal*, Gunnar Östborn explores the characteristics of Yahwism as well as Baalism and argues that there was a continual effort to differentiate Yahwism from Baalism, which was the fertility religion of Canaan.<sup>1</sup> He acknowledges that in ancient Israel, there was a challenge of Baalism which was worshipped by Canaanites and apostatized Israelites. Furthermore, to a certain extent, the practices of the Patriarchs were similar to that of Baalism.<sup>2</sup> Yahwism also appeared to adopt Baalistic idea as well as customs.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, Hosea's use of traditions is to appeal to the Israelites for their continuing adherence to Yahwism. In Östborn's view, the traditions in the book of Hosea are used to characterize the Yahwistic circle which preserves the Mosaic religion. Moreover, Östborn believes that the most distinguished concept of Yahwism is "the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt,"<sup>4</sup> emphasizing the Covenant between Yahweh and the people. In the tension between Yahwism and Baalism, the Yahwists aggressively oppressed the Baalists. Östborn states:

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<sup>1</sup> Gunnar Östborn, *Yahweh and Baal: Studies in the Book of Hosea and Related Documents* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 96.

<sup>3</sup> Östborn, *Yahweh and Baal*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 35–39, 104.



Regularly, the tension between Yahwists and Baalists was caused by attacks initiated by persons preserving the traditions of Yahweh's great deed at His deliverance of His people out of Egypt...They felt deeply the distinction between Yahweh and Baal. To these persons, Yahweh's intervention in the course of history was of greater importance than His giving fertility. Hosea, like other prophets, also adopts this attitude.<sup>5</sup>

Östborn clearly asserted that Hosea also refers to the history of Jacob and is aware of the importance of the history of the past.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, he felt that the Israelites should keep the Covenant as Yahweh's chosen people, and their apostasy from Yahweh to the worship of Baal as the most significant motive for "the antagonism between Yahweh and Baal."<sup>7</sup>

Focusing on the Yahwistic Covenant as the most important concept, which includes severe punishment of Yahweh as well as salvation activity of Yahweh, Östborn proposes that prophetic messages are the important vehicle. Their messages require the Israelites to follow the Covenant and create and develop the foundation of true Yahwism, such as regulations and laws. Östborn believes that Baalism shows a similar moral standard to Yahwism. However, he argued that there are peculiar features in Yahwism that distinguish it from Baalism: for example, 1) monotheism is outstanding in Yahwism, but Baalism shows its root in the concept of a pantheon; 2) Yahweh has no queen (Asherah) or princes (*sarim*) as gods<sup>8</sup>; 3) the Yahwistic cult emphasizes praising Yahweh and teaching Yahweh's work and instructions, while the Baalistic cult focuses on fertility

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 31–35.

based on magic; and 4) in Yahwism, human is able to obtain eternal life, whereas the other does not show any similar concept.<sup>9</sup> For Östborn these points indicate how the two religious practices are different and why Yahwism survived Baalism.

In sum, Östborn's understanding of the traditions in the book of Hosea is, therefore, a literary device that constantly appeals to the people to reflect their history in which Yahweh keeps promising the salvation in "His Covenant." The book of Hosea portrays traditions in order to fight against Baalism which was a religious rival in Hosea's time. The word of Yahweh through the prophets is also a significant modifier to construct and constitute Yahweh's regulations or laws as the foundation of Yahwism.

Östborn's claim that Hosea uses traditions to remind the people of their covenant relationship with YHWH rests upon the questionable assumption that the Pentateuchal traditions mainly play a role in supporting the covenant relationship. Unfortunately, Östborn's analysis of the traditions seems to be superficial. His approach to the Jacob tradition and the Exodus/Wilderness traditions as the stamp of the covenant tradition limits his analysis of the characteristics and significances of the traditions. Following his general analysis of the marriage metaphor as an accusation against the Baal cult, he seems to only focus on religious issues throughout the book Hosea.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 74–79.

5.2.1.2. H. L. Ginsberg, 1961 and Peter Ackroyd, 1963

In the same idea that the traditions are literary tools to secure Yahwism, in H. L. Ginsberg article, “Hosea’s Ephraim, More Fool than Knave: A New Interpretation of Hosea 12:1–14,” Hos 12 is rearranged and reconstructed based on his idea. He argues that vs. 13–14 should follow v. 6, as v. 13 relates a consequence of vs. 4–6. His reading of Hos 12 shows that the Beth-el cult was traced to the patriarch Jacob, based on Gen 21:13; 35:7 as well as Hos 12:5 [4].<sup>10</sup> He argues that Hosea was one of the first persons who objected to the El-beth-el cult because the Books of Kings, which condemns the golden calves, do not show the same attitude to it. Ginsberg states that Hosea “spun the Beth-el story of Hos 12 out of the Peniel legend” in order to object to the image of polytheism in the story of angels at Beth-el sanctuary.<sup>11</sup> In other words, Hosea discredits the invocation of El-beth-el and attempts to change a “revered figure of the past” to be a shameful icon in the interest of religious reform because the El-beth-el cult was at danger enough to corrupt pure Yahwism.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Hosea condemned Jacob for the cult and Ginsberg concludes that the presentation of 2 Kgs 18:4, which states the demolition of idols at sanctuaries, is made after the reform. It appears that both texts Ex 32 and Hos 12 present a struggle with the cult. In other words, Hos 12 and its contents are Hosea’s attempt for religious reform by using the Jacob traditions.

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<sup>10</sup> H. L. Ginsberg, “Hosea’s Ephraim, More Fool than Knave: A New Interpretation of Hosea 12:1–14,” *JBL* 80, no. 4 (1961): 339–47.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 344–345.

On the contrary, in his article, “Hosea and Jacob,” Peter Ackroyd points out the problematic ground of the scholarly view that the Jacob tradition is used in Hosea in a negative manner.<sup>13</sup> He takes issues with scholars such as T. C. Vriezen, A. Van Hoonacker, and Wolff whose arguments deal with the negative portrayals in Jacob’s life story.<sup>14</sup> Vriezen, for example, argues that the Jacob tradition shows that Israel was brought into servitude for a woman, which appears to be a humiliation of Israel. Van Hoonacker goes along the same line which focuses on Jacob’s cheating, as well as his service to Laban. Similarly, Wolff connects the tradition to false worship, arguing that the allusion to Jacob’s service for a wife does not demonstrate what is conveyed in Gen 29. Rather, the tradition emphasizes the deceitful manner of Jacob as well as the servitude which alludes to “Israel’s subjection to alien powers.”<sup>15</sup>

However, Ackroyd argues that “the Genesis traditions show a hero who is divinely blessed no matter what his opponents try to do to him.”<sup>16</sup> He disagrees with the negative treatment of vv. 4–5 because it influences the interpretation of v. 13–14 in a same manner. As Ackroyd finds problems on the exegesis in which “Israel’s present condition is seen as being the natural outcome of her past. Just as Jacob deceived, so Israel does,” he proposes that such interpretation does not completely accord with the

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Ackroyd, “Hosea and Jacob,” *VT* 13, no. 3 (1963): 245–59.

<sup>14</sup> T. C. Vriezen, “La Tradition de Jacob Dans Osée XII,” *OtSt* 1 (1942): 64–78; A. Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophètes* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1908); Wolff, *Hosea*.

<sup>15</sup> Ackroyd, “Hosea and Jacob,” 247.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

presentation of the wilderness period as a period of true relationship.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, it is difficult to assume that the prophet emphasizes two different subjects in his preaching.

In Sum, Ackroyd believes that the tradition teaches the divine promise of success, which is given by divine favor. Hosea is speaking through the traditions that Jacob's success was due to divine favor and his close relationship with God. Ackroyd believes that there were multiple traditions that bear the name Jacob. For Ackroyd, the Jacob tradition is a clear presentation of "divine willingness to bless and protect, exemplified in Israel's ancestor, is the marked unfaithfulness of the present community."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the past traditions call upon the Israelites to respond properly to YHWH.

#### 5.2.1.3. Hans W. Wolff, 1965

Wolff believes that Hosea's knowledge of the traditions comes from his experience of oral recitation by priests in various cultic settings. For Wolff, Hosea was active in northern Israel as Hosea frequently mentions geographical names, such as the royal city of Samaria, the sanctuaries of Bethel, Gilgal, the valley of Achor, Jordan River, Ramah, Gibeah, and Gilead. In addition, Wolff argues that Hosea was not "a solitary figure in his opposition to Israel's conduct."<sup>19</sup> Hosea maintained a relationship with other prophets, sharing with them that they were the messengers of YHWH, linked in the Exodus tradition. The relationship is also presented in Hosea's "clear picture of the true

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>19</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, xxii.

priest in Israel, which was presumably kept alive in the Levitic circles of his own time.”<sup>20</sup>

Wolff states that:

these circles had a close connection with the prophetic groups. This relationship between prophets and Levities accounts for Hosea’s familiarity with a large number of old Israelite traditions. It is possible that various series of Hosea’s sayings bearing no stamp of a public oration were delivered before this group of faithful followers among the opposition.<sup>21</sup>

In Hosea’s proclamation, Wolff thinks that Hosea looks back over the past history of Israel. In particular, Hosea sees Israel’s early encounter with the Baal cult, and Israel abandoned YHWH who saves them from the land of Egypt as well as in the wilderness. Through the Jacob tradition, Hosea points out Israel’s present deceit against YHWH.

Wolff suggests that Hosea’s use of historical traditions can be divided in three significant areas.<sup>22</sup> First, the historical retrospects disclose fundamental connections within Israel’s history. Comparing with the early history of Israel, the present transgression of Israel is revealed as “transgression against the God of love and election, against the Lord of saving history.”<sup>23</sup> Second, the historical retrospects reveal YHWH’s continuous struggle with the Israelites, and Hosea presents the realities of Israel’s continuing transgression. Third, as long as Israel’s early history is examined, its present clearly appears. For Wolff, Hosea’s prophecy has to be understood in the light of the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., xxii–xxiii.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., xxiii.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., xxvi–xxvii.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., xxvi.

previous saving history. However, with Hosea's message of salvation, these are connected together as a true message to the Israelites who are continually abandoning YHWH.

As Wolff connects the marriage metaphor with various cultic settings, he continues to insist on his own limited understanding of Hosea's religious context. Using this lens, he proposes that Hosea used the traditions to proclaim Israel's early apostasy against YHWH, so that Hosea's audience would reflect on their continual illicit behavior repent. Thus, Wolff simply views the traditions as a model in order to persuade Israel to reflect on the religious apostasy of their ancestors. In his view, Israel's earlier history becomes merely a moral lesson.

#### 5.2.1.4. Edwin Good, 1966

In his article, "Hosea and the Jacob Tradition," Edwin Good posits that the old traditions formed through a longer period of oral transmission, shared and re-shared in the process.<sup>24</sup> Asking what kind of knowledge the prophet Hosea had in his time, Good proposes that Hosea is not necessarily an individual prophet, but it is a "prophetic circle" which contributed to the book of Hosea.<sup>25</sup> He also believes that the Jacob stories in Hosea are not necessarily stories of Jacob but only allusions, as the stories show ambiguity when compare with Genesis narratives.

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<sup>24</sup> Edwin Good, "Hosea and the Jacob Tradition," *VT* 16, no. 2 (1966): 137–51.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 138. Wolff also mentions that Hosea was not a solitary figure. Cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, xxii–xxiii.

In his study of Hos 12:3–5, for example, Good argues that “Judah” in v. 3 is the alteration from “Israel” after Israel fell, when Hosea’s oracles were ultimately transmitted in and applied to Judah. He requires understanding the double sense of the names of Israel/Jacob. In other words, Hosea means the patriarch himself but also means contemporary Israel. Therefore, the Jacob tradition serves the prophet as “the pattern of the present Jacob, the nation itself.”<sup>26</sup> In the discussion of Jacob’s birth, Good proposes that the term, עֶקֶב, does not mean “take by the heel” but rather “swindle,” and suggests that verse 4 is not merely a reference to the birth story but is the wider conflict story between Jacob and Esau. He further points out that the prophet does not simply point the stories of the past but interpret it for the present by using the double meaning. Therefore, the mention of the brother brings a conflict with the brother nation, Judah.

In relation to his study of Hos 12:3–5, 13, Good summarizes his arguments. First, Hosea was a prophetic poet, not a historiographer, so that his disorder in references of Jacob’s historical activities in Hosea is of no importance. Second, the tradition that Hosea uses has not yet reached its final form “theologically or literarily, or any authoritative status as interpretation of the past.” Jacob’s image in Hosea is quite different from that in Genesis, as we now have it.<sup>27</sup> Third, Hosea might know one story about Jacob that we do not have. This means that Hosea’s knowledge of the Jacob tradition is only from an oral tradition. Fourth, Hosea employs the Jacob tradition to remind his audience of the meaning of the past. In the case of Jacob, the meaning of the past clearly indicates that

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<sup>26</sup> Good, “Hosea and the Jacob Tradition,” 140.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 150.



Jacob is “no example of the true knowledge of God, no father in genuine faith.”<sup>28</sup> Fifth, Hosea views that the ancestral tradition is connected to the non-Yahwistic Beth-el cult which is Hosea’s definite opponent. Hosea takes hostile action against the cultic locale of this Jacob covenant tradition in Beth-el. Sixth, Jacob story was on the way to becoming “incorporated theologically into the Yahwistic sphere”<sup>29</sup> but not yet a Yahwistic story in Hosea’s view.

Good’s claim that the Jacob tradition was still an oral status of various stories about Israel’s ancestor, who is clearly viewed in negative sense, rests upon the questionable assumption that Hosea brought up his ancestor along with negative images, in order to teach his audience about the past. My own view, however, is that other contents in the book still indicate that the Israelites have to learn from Jacob, their patriarch. These conflicts have to be explained.

#### 5.2.1.5. Walter Brueggemann, 1968

In his book, *Tradition in Crisis: A Study of Hosea*, Walter Brueggemann explores the traditions in the prophetic books, especially Hosea, looking at the continuity between the religion of the Torah and the faith of the prophets.<sup>30</sup> He argues that the prophets are those who employ “the reassertion and application of the old traditions” as they interpret

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Tradition for Crisis: A Study in Hosea* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1968), 13.

their present community of faith. Scholars sometimes misunderstand that the prophets invent new ideas to speak or repeat the old traditions. However, Brueggemann believes that the prophetic words and acts are rooted “in the ancient faith which has its source in Moses.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, the intention of the prophets and their prophetic works would be understood well by revisiting the old historical and legal traditions in the Torah. Brueggemann attempts to connect the forms of prophetic speech with the ancient liturgical situation, such as the cult, where, he believes, a “covenant was made, remembered, and answered.”<sup>32</sup> He focuses on the importance of the covenant institution of cult in relation to the nature of the prophet because “cult is the public assembly in which Israel did and said what needed to be said and done to implement the covenant with Yahweh.”<sup>33</sup>

For Brueggemann, Hosea asserts the covenant crisis of Israel by using the marriage metaphor, but “the problems are not moral and cultic but theological, i.e., covenantal.”<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Hosea engages tradition and crisis in order to insist that the tradition of the faith community is important, and every crisis that the community faces has to be understood in the interpretation of the tradition. In Brueggemann’s words, traditions are the memories with God’s gracious deeds with the Israelites, and the prophet has to proclaim the traditions in the ways that address relevantly to the new crisis situation. Focusing on the covenant relationship with YHWH, Brueggemann states that

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 108.

“when the present crisis is read as an Assyrian threat, the old traditions don’t count. But when the present crisis is shown to be a crisis in covenant, then the old traditions are still valid.”<sup>35</sup> Brueggemann shows how the tradition functions in the book of Hosea, suggesting that Hosea uses a tradition of covenant in order to show the example of the prophetic ministry.

Brueggemann’s practical application is emphasized in the last chapter, arguing that Hosea brings the older historical and legal Torah traditions, especially Mosaic covenantal traditions, in order to interpret a new crisis in the faith community. He believes that this reflection of the old tradition is what the prophetic ministry has to follow in every similar setting, such as an Assyrian threat, Canaanite syncretism, Babylonian exile, and Roman power.<sup>36</sup> Brueggemann’s interpretation of the traditions is mainly based on three points: the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel; memory of the tradition which is how the Israelite overcomes the crisis; a preaching that rhetorically argues for the Israelites to keep the covenant for salvation. Therefore, in Brueggemann’s view, the tradition and covenant is a confession of faith, and Hosea is an ideal prophet who observes the covenant and proclaims the need of the tradition.

I agree that the faith communities have to stand upon the covenant relationship with YHWH as Brueggemann preaches in his book. Brueggemann only focuses on the covenantal relationship of the old tradition and does not engage with the specific content of the tradition in detail. Other scholars, such as R. Lansing Hicks, also point out that

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 129.

Brueggemann's use of the tradition is focused too much on the Sinai experience and is not really attuned to various complexes of the traditions.<sup>37</sup> My own view is that Brueggemann's interpretation narrows the prophetic ministry in order to overcome a crisis in faith and limits Hosea's claims to persuade the Israelites to keep the covenant.

#### 5.2.1.6. Heinz-Dieter Neef, 1987

In his book, *Die Heilstraditionen Israels in Der Verkündigung Des Propheten Hosea*, Heinz-Dieter Neef thoroughly analyses the traditions in relation to Jacob, Moses, wilderness, covenant, and the Decalogue, in the book of Hosea.<sup>38</sup> He believes that these traditions are the prophet's rhetorical materials to proclaim the continuity and constancy of the love of YHWH toward Israel. In other words, the prophet asserts Israel's repentance and return to YHWH by using the traditions.

Neef thoroughly surveys scholarly viewpoints on the Jacob tradition and reports that some scholars during the early nineteenth century view the Jacob tradition negatively, pointing out that Jacob is portrayed as a trickster and deceiver and Hosea uses that portrayal in his speech.<sup>39</sup> Other scholars disagree with this view and propose that Jacob is

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<sup>37</sup> For more discussion of covenant relationship based on the traditions, see R. Lansing Hicks, "Review of Tradition for Crisis: A Study in Hosea," *JBL* 91, no. 1 (1972): 105–7.

<sup>38</sup> Heinz-Dieter Neef, *Die Heilstraditionen Israels in Der Verkündigung Des Propheten Hosea*, BZAW 169 (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 28–29.

a model who shows how one can be blessed by God.<sup>40</sup> In other words, they see a model in Jacob because he strives persistently for the blessing of God.<sup>41</sup> These various interpretations, for Neef, are due to the fact that Hosea merely alludes to the Jacob tradition. Therefore, he argues that understanding of “Hosea’s vision” is important to understand his use of the traditions.

Neef asserts that the prophetic message of Hosea is decisively affected by “der Aufnahme der Traditionen Israels.”<sup>42</sup> The tradition emphasizes that “Jakob ist von seiner Geburt an in den Heilsplan Gottes eingebunden.”<sup>43</sup> Jacob is the one YHWH takes care of as well as the carrier of divine blessing. Hosea reinterprets Jacob, who turned to YHWH, and Moses, who brought Israel from Egyptian bondage and was protected during the wilderness period. The traditions raise the importance of the love relationship between YHWH and Israel. For Neef, the Decalogue tradition plays a significant role in concretizing YHWH’s covenant with Israel, and Hosea mentions the tradition to proclaim a prerequisite for a prosperous community. Neef states:

Hosea wird in seiner Verkündigung nicht müde zu betonen, daß Jahwe Israels Gott ist, der sich allein diesem Volk offenbart hatte, um für es da zu sein. Mit der Herausführung Israels aus Ägypten, seiner Führung durch die Wüste und der Erfüllung der Landverheißung stellte er seine Treue und Liebe zu Israel unter

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 31–33.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 247. “The record of the traditions of Israel” (my translations will be used in this paper unless otherwise noted)

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. “Jacob, from when he was born, is the part of divine plan of salvation.”

Beweis (12,10; 13,4). Mit dem Rückbezug auf die Heilstraditionen Israels erinnert Hosea an Jahwe und seine Taten für Israel.<sup>44</sup>

In Neef's view, Hosea employs the old traditions in order to explain how the past and present are connected and how YHWH's love for Israel is consistent, because the current Israel "strebt nicht wie Jakob nach dem göttlichen Segen, sondern entfernt sich durch sein Schuldhaftes Verhalten immer mehr von seinem Gott."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, Hosea encourages his audience to move toward repentance.

In my view, Neef's approach to the old traditions as stories of YHWH's continuing intervention is more promising than other scholars' arguments that exclusively emphasize the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel. Even though I disagree with much that Neef says about the love relationship, I concur with his main idea that Hosea expresses the sense of the connectivity between the past and present. If Neef would have analyzed Hosea in light of a socio-political approach to Hosea's time, his approach would have been more productive.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 256. "Hosea never tires of emphasizing that YHWH God of Israel, who revealed himself to the people, is always with them. With the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, his guidance through the wilderness, and the fulfillment of the promise of the land, YHWH showed his faithfulness and love for Israel to prove (Hos 12:10; 13:4). By referring back to the tradition of salvation of Israel, Hosea reminds us YHWH and his deeds to Israel."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 254. "does not strive after God's blessing, as Jacob did, but distances itself from God more and more due to its blameworthy behavior."

#### 5.2.1.7. Douglas Stuart, 1987

In his book, *Hosea-Jonah*, Douglas Stuart argues that Hosea employs the “lawsuit form” in Hos 12 to claim Israel’s guilt in the divine court because Israel breaks the covenant with YHWH in the form of “their deceit and fraud (v. 1), lying and destruction (v. 2), exploitations (v. 8), excessive profits and iniquity (v. 9), evil, worthlessness and heterodox religion (vv. 12–13), provocations, capital crimes, and contempt (v. 15).”<sup>46</sup> Hosea emphasizes the covenant, which is to remember their election as the people of YHWH, and their covenant responsibilities. Stuart understands that Hosea uses the traditions to point out such rejections to the covenant because Jacob is not only the one whose name was given by YHWH as Israel, but also the one who is faithful to the covenant of YHWH’s election.

Stuart does not agree with the scholarly judgment that Jacob is a deceiver in order to show what Israel has become. Scholars argue that Jacob is portrayed as a negative figure in Hos 12.<sup>47</sup> However, Stuart rejects these opinions because the retrospectives in the book present Israel’s history prior to the conquest as a time of relative closeness to YHWH. He states that “Hosea holds the exodus-wilderness period before the people in contrast to their behavior in his own day.” For Stuart, the Jacob stories, therefore, could not be a portrayal of “a pre-Sinai sinfulness.” Moreover, the descriptions about Jacob in

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<sup>46</sup> Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 188, 197.

<sup>47</sup> For a study of Jacob in the negative sense, see Neef, *Die Heilstraditionen Israels in Der Verkündigung Des Propheten Hosea*; Ginsberg, “Hosea’s Ephraim, More Fool than Knave”; Good, “Hosea and the Jacob Tradition.”

Hos 12 sound “either neutral or positive, but not negative.”<sup>48</sup> The contents of the traditions in Hos 12 “either contrast with Israel’s infidelity, or serve a linguistic-mnemonic purpose in making a point about Israel’s covenant obligations.”<sup>49</sup> In Hosea’s view, Jacob and Moses are the covenant-keepers to make sure that Israel maintains the right relationship with YHWH.

Stuart claims a problematic ground of the Wellhausen’s argument in *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* which posits that the Hebrew Bible prophets were creatively producing interpretations of Israel’s behavior before the time the Pentateuch was written.<sup>50</sup> Wellhausen believes that the legal and covenantal ideas of the prophets were based on their creativity and were later “eventuated in the composition of the deuteronomic (D) and priestly (P) law codes in the seventh and sixth-fifth century BCE respectively.”<sup>51</sup> In contrast, Stuart argues that the prophetic ministries rely heavily on the traditions that “consciously and directly went back to the ancient Mosaic covenant as expressed in the Pentateuch.”<sup>52</sup> The prophets never created any doctrine but considered themselves as messengers of YHWH whose will is shown in the curses and blessings of the Mosaic covenant. In sum, Stuart argues that Hosea uses the traditions to raise important questions. How and why may God’s people expect to be punished by a variety of disasters? How and why may they expect to be rescued and restored eventually?

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<sup>48</sup> Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 191–192, 197.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>50</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena Zur Geschichte Israels*.

<sup>51</sup> Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, xxxi.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., xxxii.



Stuart's interpretation of the traditions, as well as the prophetic ministry, is deeply connected with the covenantal relationship between Israel and YHWH. Therefore, the use of traditions emphasizes the need of remembrance of the time when the Israelites erected the covenant with YHWH. His focus on covenantal relationship only explores YHWH's promise given to the Israelites in the Deuteronomistic sense, namely, return to be saved! However, Stuart would need more to discuss the details of the traditions carefully in order to lay out what extent the careful selections of the traditions convey in Hosea's argument. Stuart's understanding of the view that the traditions are rhetorical devices to portray prophetic ministry based on several law suit forms in Hos 12 is promising.

#### 5.2.1.8. Dwight Daniels, 1990

In his book, *Hosea and Salvation History*, Dwight Daniels argues that Hosea shows his knowledge of various historical traditions and yet, the traditions are not conclusively fixed as one written form.<sup>53</sup> Hosea uses the traditions to emphasize the four significant periods in Israel's history: the patriarchal period noted in Hos 12:4–7, 13 [3–6, 12]; the Exodus-wilderness period noted in Hos 12:13–14 [12–13]; the period of Canaanization alluded to in Hos 12:9 [8] (cf. 9:10); and lastly the period of renewal shown in Hos 2:16–25, where Hosea turns to the future renewal that he envisions.<sup>54</sup> For him, these continuing periods are important because he attempts to lay out a divine intervention throughout the periods, which he named “salvation history of Yahweh.”

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<sup>53</sup> Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History*.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 33–110.

Daniels proposes that the reason why Hosea displays various similarities and discrepancies between his use of traditions and the narratives in Genesis is because there were various forms of the traditions at the time of Hosea's activity. He states that "Hosea drew upon a source containing variant forms of the traditions preserved in Genesis."<sup>55</sup> Daniels observes that the existence of the variant forms is clear when he distinguishes the idea that the wilderness traditions and the Exodus tradition have different life settings and show both similarities and dissimilarities. One dissimilarity is that Hosea's traditions taken from the wilderness period do not include the murmuring motif or the golden calf tradition that the Yahwist material contains. In contrast, Hosea views Exodus as imparting the knowledge of God and Moses as a prophet. He is also aware of the Exodus tradition as connected with a covenant tradition. Therefore, Daniels argues the availability of different forms in Hosea's time. Daniels argues that "written compilations of legal traditions existed in Hosea's day, and probably, though not necessarily, of historical traditions as well."<sup>56</sup> He believes that Hosea's understanding of Israel's history presupposes traditions written by the priests prior to the seventh century. He states that Hosea displays "theologically motivated presentations of the formative period of Israel's history at a date significantly earlier than the late seventh century."<sup>57</sup> Daniels points out that Hosea summarizes traditions of Israel's history based on his understanding of relationship between Yahweh and Israel in order to determine his own message.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 130.

According to Daniels, reflection on the relationship between Yahweh and Israel fosters Hosea's view of the future.

Daniels believes that Hosea conceived of Yahweh as actively involved in all of Israel's history. In Hosea's view, this overall divine intervention in the history is necessary in the plan of Yahweh's salvation history. The divine guidance continued in the Exodus, covenant, and wilderness periods. However, from the time the Israelites obtained the land, they began to move away from Yahweh's salvation plan. Therefore, Yahweh intends to remove any obstacle that hinders Israel's realization of the divine salvation for the people. This intervention is fully dependent on "the continuity of Yahweh's will for his people."<sup>59</sup> Based on this view of the salvation plan of Yahweh, Hosea employs the old traditions which proclaim Yahweh as Israel's sole deliverer and points out that the Israelites' special status is dependent on their abiding by the responsibilities required in these traditions. Thus, when they realize the difference, they can be in the divine salvation history again.

Of course, many will agree that the prophet is not the one who repeats the old paradigm of preaching, but the one who actively engages his message in his life setting. Daniels' understanding of Israel's history based on divine salvation history shows his theological approach toward historical crisis. Although I agree that the key point of a prophetic message is that people need to return to YHWH when they sin and that Hosea looks through the traditions to indicate how YHWH acted when Israel suffered, I cannot accept Daniels' overall conclusion that Hosea proclaims repentance of the Israelites in his

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 125.

theology of salvation history by the use of the traditions. Daniels overlooks what I consider an important point about Hosea's social and political setting. Daniels' emphasis on the theological approach to the book of Hosea based on Daniel's interpretation of the divine plan of the salvation history is incomplete and overly focuses on his biased interpretation of the Jacob tradition as if Jacob was the one who created the Beth-el cult, which Hosea criticizes. Daniels' study would be more productive if he made more connections with the whole contents of the book.

#### 5.2.1.9. G. I. Davies, 1992

In his commentary, *Hosea*, G. I. Davies believes that Hosea was significantly influenced by a prophetic movement, mainly led by Elijah, which asserts Israel's adherence to Yahweh alone.<sup>60</sup> He finds out that Jehu's revolt was based on his desire to break up idol worship under Ahab. Hosea's words against the idol worship, such as Hos 2:13, 17; 4:13–14; 7:14, show that there were still foreign cults that corrupt Israel's religious monotheism.<sup>61</sup> Reacting on these critical religious issues, Hosea proclaims Yahweh as Israel's God who brought her from the land of Egypt, emphasizing the covenant relationship between Israel and God who provided for all of Israel's needs.

For Davies, the question where Hosea upheld such a theology is very important in order to understand Hosea's use of the traditions. Davies disagrees when he points out Wolff's understanding of Hosea's origin from a prophetic and Levitical circle who

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<sup>60</sup> Davies, *Hosea*, 1992.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 29–31.

produced the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>62</sup> Rather, Davies states, “it is likely that this underlying theology was preserved in the formularies of the very shrines of which Hosea is in other respects so critical.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, Davies proposes that Psalms 80 and 81 were designed for the worship at the major national shrines and show many parallels with the book of Hosea. Therefore, he dates these activities during the period between 733 and 722 and believes that the Exodus-covenant tradition is also related to the shrines of Bethel and Dan. For Davies, the tradition about God and Jacob was known at the Bethel shrine.

Davies agrees with von Rad and Clements that the root of Hosea’s traditions comes from the “sacral traditions of the early period.”<sup>64</sup> Davies further insists that Hosea was not a mere expositor of the existing cultic traditions. Rather, Hosea developed the received tradition and proclaimed “a new beginning” beyond any limitation in relation to the traditions such as Exodus, wilderness, covenant, etc.<sup>65</sup> The Jacob tradition used by Hosea also provides his intention, which is to find “the sins of the present generation.”<sup>66</sup> Davies complains about the presentation of Jacob in a positive sense and argues that Jacob is viewed in derogatory manner. In the speech of Hosea, Israel’s history is revisited and reevaluated along the Exodus tradition as a solid basis for salvation that Yahweh would keep his people.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 33–34.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 272.

Davies's understanding of the book of Hosea is deeply engaged with his own reading of book's metaphor and historical background. His focus on religious apostasy of Hosea's criticism limits Davies to the sacred cultic setting as the background of the book. His analysis of the prophetic tradition followed by Jehu, as well as Hosea, is still not convincing. Jehu's purge as a religious purification would not explain the prosperity of idol worships in Israel during and after Jehu's reign (2 Kgs 10:19). However, his argument on the existence of the basic elements of the traditions before Hosea's time is well agreed in scholarship.

#### 5.2.1.10. Thomas Dozeman, 2000

In his article, "Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition," Thomas Dozeman argues that the prophet is trying to construct a foundation for "salvation history" by using the wilderness wandering as the focal component.<sup>67</sup> Hosea historicized the northern cult into a history of salvation through "the motif of divine leading into the wilderness."<sup>68</sup> In this case, the divine judgment would be interpreted as not permanent but only temporary, like the period of wilderness wandering. Dozeman argues that scholarly interpretation about the imagery of "returning" to the desert is not what Hosea

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<sup>67</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, "Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition," in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. Essays in Honour of John Van Seters*, BZAW 294 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 69.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 70.

understands.<sup>69</sup> Since the Hebrew word, מִדְבָּר (wilderness, desert) can be metaphorically used as “desolation,” Dozeman believes that the term conveys “imagery of desolation, not geography.”<sup>70</sup> As a result, Hosea is describing the quality of Israel with desolation imagery.

Dozeman states that “the references to the exodus in Hosea suggest that the story of salvation history as recounted in Exodus had not yet been written, since it relates Israel’s deliverance from Egypt with their subsequent journey through the wilderness, an event unknown to the prophet Hosea.”<sup>71</sup> In Hos 12:10[9]; 13:4, Hosea regards Egypt as the place of origin for Israel where Yahweh also states his identity (“I am Yahweh your God from the land of Egypt”). However, Dozeman points out that Hosea is not “familiar with the exodus as an event attached to the wilderness wandering tradition.”<sup>72</sup> In other words, the exodus and wilderness are not associated in Hosea, as he states “the wilderness is not interpreted in relationship to the exodus in any of the texts.”<sup>73</sup> Dozeman is referring to these texts, such as Hos. 2:9; 9:10; and 13:15.

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<sup>69</sup> Some scholars suggest that the period of wilderness is characterized as a time when Israel and YHWH were in harmony, and Hosea proclaims Israel’s repentance by reflecting the wilderness tradition. See Yair Hoffman, “A North Israelite Typological Myth and a Judean Historical Tradition: The Exodus in Hosea and Amos,” *VT* 39, no. 2 (1989): 169–82.

<sup>70</sup> Dozeman, “Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition,” 2000, 64.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, ECC (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009), 29.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, “Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition,” in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 66.

Dozeman argues that Hosea uses liturgical language in Hos 8:4–6; 10:5; 12:9, 13; 13:2 and proposes that the Bethel cult, which is Hosea’s object of polemical language, is the liturgical background.<sup>74</sup> The exodus formula is introduced in the book within the setting of the Bethel cult. Dozeman argues that Hosea’s use of exodus imagery is rooted in the tradition of salvation from Egypt.<sup>75</sup> In other words, Dozeman believes that Hosea’s proclamation is especially focusing on the cultic worship practices of the Bethel cult (Hos 4:17; 12:2–6). The oracles of Amos, who is a contemporary of the prophet Hosea, also share this cultic worship tradition. Thus, Dozeman concludes that “the tradition of associating Yahweh with Egypt may have been centered in the worship practices of the northern kingdom of Israel, thus providing a contrast to worship practices in the southern temple of Jerusalem, where salvation was envisioned as Yahweh’s enthronement on Mount Zion.”<sup>76</sup> For Dozeman, Hosea is an innovator, not dependent upon an early version of the Pentateuchal histories, who attempts to lay the foundation of salvation history for later histories.

#### 5.2.1.11. James Nogalski, 2011

In his book, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea-Jonah*, Nogalski basically attempts to reconstruct a compositional history of the Twelve Prophets as a single edited work.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Dozeman, “Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition,” 2000, 62–68.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>76</sup> Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 28.

<sup>77</sup> James Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea-Jonah*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011).



Based on his source critical research basis in German academic circles, Nogalski divides Hos 12 in six short sections and these sections provide “the interplay of accusation, illustration, doxology, paronomasia, allusion, and summation.”<sup>78</sup> His interpretation on the book of Hosea is in fact based on his other books. In his book, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve*, Nogalski criticizes Good and Yee’s thesis that the final redactor composed the ending blocks of the three structural divisions (Hos 1–3, 4–11, and 12–14). Instead, Nogalski argues that Hos 14:2–9 plays the most significant role in the macrostructure of the book and that the author of Hos 14:2–9 is clearly aware of Hos 1–3, 4–11, and 12–14.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the unit serves as a connection to the book of Joel by means of some catchwords, such as inhabitants, grain, and vine, and further the theme of the unit recurs at significant positions in the Book of the Twelve.<sup>80</sup> Such recurring themes and motifs include the Day of YHWH, fertility of the land, the fate of YHWH’s people, and the problem of theodicy.

In particular, Nogalski provides a literary analysis of Hos 14:2–10 and concludes that Hos 14:2–9 is a cohesive unit which calls for repentance and that Hos 14:10 works as the final ending to Hosea, whose composition stems from Deuteronomistic circles. He argues that “the use of cultic language and the relationship of these verses to other passages (e.g. Isa 30:16; Deut 17:16) support the arguments of post-Hoseanic

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>79</sup> James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 217 (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 61–65.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 69–73. For Nogalski, the catchwords are a significant piece of evidences that not only creates a literary horizon of the Book of the Twelve, but also explores the growth, unity, and intentions of the Book of the Twelve.

composition.”<sup>81</sup> Moreover, he insists that the indication of Assyria in Hos 14:4 [3] and related verses presupposes the destruction of Samaria because it became clear for the author that Assyria was not a political supporter, but a national enemy.<sup>82</sup>

Nogalski’s approach to Hosea is deeply rooted on his interpretation of the Book of the Twelve. He presupposes that there are two multi-volume corpora as literary precursors to the Book of the Twelve. One of the two corpora, labeled as the Deuteronomistic corpus, contains the early writings of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah. The other is the Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 corpus. According to Nogalski, these writings share superscriptive bracketing of historical eras, catchwords connecting between the beginnings and ends of these writings, a Deuteronomistic pattern, and editorial expansions overarching these four writings.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, his understanding of those materials must sit within the time when the four writings were extant. He believes that the textual indications about the Syro-Ephraimite war provide a historical setting for several passages, and even the reflection of the destruction of Samaria suggests the book’s exilic and post-exilic editorial expansion. Moreover, comparing Hosea 12:6–7 with the books of Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah, Nogalski argues that the catchwords—such as love, justice, walking with God, and improprieties using scales—shows thematic connections which are a later addition of the Deuteronomistic circles.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 218 (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 274–275.

In my view, Hos 14 is important, in order to understand Hosea's political viewpoint toward the vassal relationship between Assyria and Israel. Throughout the book, Hosea raises the question of the vassal relationship and proclaims the right path for Israel. The final chapter of Hosea is his conclusive prophetic message, summarizing his intention, saying that "Assyria cannot save us" in Hos 14:4 [3]. Unfortunately, Nogalski employs those catchwords as the literary evidence to advocate its insertion after Samaria fell. Thus he ignores the historical context of the prophet's time. In other words, Nogalski does not understand why Hosea is concerned with the marriage metaphor, as well as all the contents of Hosea's criticism in the book. Particularly, Hosea's use of the traditions is very important but Nogalski's approach to the tradition is not convincing. Nogalski's analysis is limited in a textual unit (Hos 14:2–10), constructing a connection to other passages as well as the Book of the Twelve. I disagree with Nogalski's view that there are catchwords to connect passages or books because, as Jakob Wöhrle points out, texts do not arise out of an empty space, but out of given culture, history, and society, therefore, "not every intertextual relationship between two texts has to be explained as an intentional relationship."<sup>84</sup> In short, these intertextual references are not the key components which explain the relationship among the texts. Moreover, the assumption that the mention of Assyria in the text labels them as later additions totally ignores Hosea's prophetic ministry as well as the prophetic ministry in general.

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<sup>84</sup> Jakob Wöhrle, "So Many Cross-References! Methodological Reflections on the Problem of Intertextual Relationship and Their Significance for Redaction Critical Analysis," in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations, Redactional Processes, Historical Insights*, ed. Rainer Albertz, James Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle, BZAW 433 (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

#### 5.2.1.12. Jakob Wöhrle, 2012

In his book, *Die Frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches, Entstehung und Komposition*, Jakob Wöhrle argues that Pentateuchal references such as the Jacob narrative, the Exodus narrative, and the Wilderness narrative in Hosea 12 show disruptive syntax which points to later additions to the book of Hosea.<sup>85</sup> He believes that it is hard to categorize the contents of Hos 4–14 by thematic or chronological connections and insists that the book of Hosea, or at least Hos 4–14, looks like a mixed “Logiensammlung.”<sup>86</sup> Thus, the references to the traditions are irrelevant for understanding the dating and composition of Hosea, just as the dating of the composition of Hosea then became irrelevant for dating Pentateuchal sources.

Some scholars observe that the books of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah show a similar thematic orientation and formulation in two ways.<sup>87</sup> First, the superscriptions of these books show their similar structures and dating systems. Next, they show Deuteronomistic theology in several instances throughout the books of the Twelve Prophets. Thus, those scholars argue that these books were finalized by the Deuteronomistic editorial process.<sup>88</sup> However, Wöhrle still points out that the book of

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<sup>85</sup> Jakob Wöhrle, *Die Frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches, Entstehung und Komposition*, BZAW 360 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 55. “collection of words”

<sup>87</sup> Scholars who argue for the combination of the four prophetic books are Nogalski, Scharf, Albertz, Zenger, Macchi, and Schmitt. For the details of the study, see *ibid.*, 51.

<sup>88</sup> Scholars who argue that the Deuteronomistic editorial process finalized the Twelve Prophets are Yee, Nissinen, Schmidt, and Jeremias. For the details of the study, see *ibid.*

Hosea does not have any special thematic relations with the other books of the Twelve Prophets, as the book of Hosea does not present “Auseinandersetzung mit den Fremdvölkern oder der Tag Jhwhs im Hoseabuch”.<sup>89</sup>

Wöhrle’s interpretation is different because he asserts that the books of the Twelve Prophets are the product of a deliberate editorial process, which was taken in several phases. He proposes that the four books above are the first collection of the books of the Twelve Prophets, and they are exilic productions which were combined and edited in 539-520 BCE.<sup>90</sup> According to Wöhrle, the four books are a literary debate from the time of the exile, asserting that “not only cultic, but also social offences led to the divine wrath, and social criteria will determine the future of the people.”<sup>91</sup> In other words, the books reinterpret the oppression of the social upper class against the poor and insist that the future restoration is reserved for the poor remnant of the land, not for the upper class or returnees.<sup>92</sup> He concludes that this argument has not yet been considered fully and “the exilic book of the Four does not merely copy the contents of DtrH.”<sup>93</sup> Rather, the four exilic prophetic books present a concept opposed to DtrH. For Wöhrle, the exilic book of the Four employs the pre-exilic prophetic tradition. However, he states that “the accusation of the pre-exilic prophets against social, economic and political offences finds

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 56–57. “dispute with the foreign nations or the day of YHWH in the book of Hosea”

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 54–58.

<sup>91</sup> Wöhrle, “No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones,” 608.

<sup>92</sup> Wöhrle, *Die Frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches, Entstehung und Komposition*, 462; Wöhrle, “No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones,” 623–626.

<sup>93</sup> Wöhrle, “No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones,” 613, 623.

no reception in DtrH.”<sup>94</sup> He points out that the silence about prophets and kings and consideration about the poor indicate that the message in the books “was not acceptable to the circles responsible for DtrH who took the cultic laws of Deuteronomy as the criteria for their interpretation of pre-exilic history.”<sup>95</sup>

In another book, *Der Abschluss des Zwölfprophetenbuches: Buchübergreifende Redaktionsprozesse in den Späten Sammlungen*, Wöhrle argues that the book of Hosea underwent the final redaction when the Twelve Prophetic books were compiled.<sup>96</sup> In several redactional stages, the theme of the forgiveness of Yahweh, as well as salvation of Yahweh, clearly relates to the composition of the “Gnaden-Korpus,” which he believes was the latest stage of the Twelve Prophets.<sup>97</sup> In other words, the reintegration of the book of Hosea was the final editorial process, which resulted in its present form in the Twelve Prophets.

As Wöhrle notes the book of Hosea’s abrupt literary disconnections, he concludes that the book is a combination or collection of oral sayings. However, I question why the later redactors, who skillfully edited the book’s message to oppose the Dtr theology, left the disconnections. Is the final redactor a careful literalist or an elementary combiner/collector? Since Wöhrle argues that the editors are thoughtful creators or scholars whose intention is clear, his basic evaluation of the book is not convincing.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 623.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Jakob Wöhrle, *Der Abschluss des Zwölfprophetenbuches: Buchübergreifende Redaktionsprozesse in den Späten Sammlungen*, BZAW 389 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2008), 429.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 433–437. “Grace corpus”

Wöhrle situates the content of the book of Hosea in the exilic time period and this date is critically problematic. In my opinion, Wöhrle's argument basically ignores any possibility of the use of Hosea's Pentateuchal citations in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Furthermore, his view would include difficulties in establishing the compositional history of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets. He ignores Hosea's issues, involving what it meant to ally with Assyria and what it meant to propose alliance with Aram instead. The Pentateuchal references to Jacob going to Aram for a wife, to the prophet who led us up from Egypt, and to the setting of territorial boundaries with Laban are all relevant for understanding that there were some Pentateuchal narratives already in the monarchic period, which are part of E or the Ephraimitic material. Rather, I insist that instead Hosea is actively using the Pentateuchal citations in the narratives to support his political viewpoint, involving what it meant to ally with Assyria and what it meant to propose alliance with Aram. The contexts of the prophet and resources in Ancient Near Eastern materials provide sufficient background for understanding Hosea's intention proclaimed in his message.

### 5.2.2. Synthesis

In the preceding sections, I have presented scholarly readings that focus on the various aspects of the Pentateuchal citations in relation to the Jacob tradition and the Exodus/Wilderness traditions. These studies provide a range of approaches. Stuart, Wolff, Brueggemann, Östborn, and Neef view the traditions as a pathway to reflect the Covenant relationship with YHWH. Dozeman, Good, and Ginsberg propose that Hosea opposes to

the Bethel cult in Hosea 12 as a main problem to corrupt Yahwism. Scholars, who argue that the traditions elucidate YHWH's salvation history and continuity of divine plan, are Daniels, Dozeman, Neef, and Davies. Besides, there are discussions on the Pentateuchal citations.

Östborn looks at Hosea's religious issue against Baalism, which was a religious rival, and argues that the Pentateuchal traditions provide an assurance that Israel and YHWH are in covenant relationship. For Östborn, the traditions are Hosea's tools to appeal to the Israelites in order to assert their continuing adherence to Yahwism. In the same line, Wolff believes that Hosea's proclamation was influenced by the prophetic groups, and the traditions in Hosea's speech are historical retrospects to revisit the history of YHWH's saving actions in order to make the Israelites repent their sinful behavior against YHWH. Brueggemann's practical approach to the faith community with the old traditions proposes that Hosea points out the importance of looking back the old traditions due to its constant teaching on the covenant relationship that has given to the Israelites. These scholars above view Hosea's Pentateuchal citations as a pathway or a mirror to examine the status of the Covenant tradition. Similar but in different approach, Neef proposes that looking that the sinful situation of Israel, Hosea employs the old traditions in order to explain how the past and present are connected and how YHWH's love for Israel is consistent. He emphasizes the continuity of YHWH's love toward the Israelites.

Ginsberg proposes that Hosea was one of the first persons who objected to the image of polytheism in the story of angels at Bethel sanctuary because the cult corrupted pure Yahwism. Such cult was traced to Jacob based on the textual references both from



Genesis and Hosea. Therefore, Ginsberg views Jacob as a negative character in the text. Likewise, Good believes that Hosea was a prophetic poet, not a historiographer, so that his disorder in references of Jacob's historical events is of no importance. It is partially because the Jacob tradition is yet oral forms. For Good, Hosea views that the ancestral tradition is connected to the non-Yahwistic Bethel cult which is Hosea's definite opponent.

Along the same lines, focusing on the covenant tradition, Davies also insists that there were still foreign cults that corrupt Israel's religious monotheism during Hosea's time. He finds out that Hosea's traditions come from the sacral traditions, and he developed the received traditions and adopted them in order to assert a new beginning beyond the traditions. However, unfortunately, Davies's interpretation is mainly based on Israel's apostasy against YHWH as well as YHWH's salvation history.

On the contrary, Ackroyd disagrees with scholars, such as Ginsberg, who interpreted Jacob negatively, and argues that the wilderness tradition displays a period of true relationship with YHWH. Therefore, both different concepts would not be in the same preaching. Rather, Ackroyd argues that the traditions teaches the divine promise of success which is given by divine favor. In other words, Jacob's success was due to divine favor and his close relationship with YHWH.

Stuart finds the several lawsuit forms in Hos 12 and links to the interpretation of the Pentateuchal traditions. According to Stuart, Hosea uses the traditions to point out such rejections to the covenant because Jacob is not only the one whose name was given by YHWH as Israel, but also the one who is faithful to the covenant of YHWH's election.

In this sense, Jacob and Moses are the covenant-keepers to make sure that Israel maintains the right relationship with YHWH, and the prophetic ministries rely heavily on the traditions to revisit the Mosaic covenant.

Besides, Daniels approach to the Pentateuchal traditions differs from other scholars. He proposes a salvation history of YHWH in which YHWH intervenes throughout the periods from the patriarchal time to the period of renewal in the future. For Daniels, the old traditions proclaim that YHWH is Israel's sole deliverer, and that the Israelites' special status is dependent on their abiding by the responsibilities required in these traditions. Similarly, Dozeman believes that the prophet is trying to construct a foundation for salvation history by using the wilderness wandering as the focal component. Such motif is to emphasize divine leading into the wilderness as a temporary period of YHWH's salvation history. He also points out that the Bethel cult is where Hosea criticizes in the text, following other scholars, such as Good and Ginsberg.

Nogalski argues that some catchwords in Hos 12 show thematic connections with the Deuteronomistic production. He believes that the textual indications about the Syro-Ephraimite war provide a historical setting for several passages, and even the reflection of the destruction of Samaria suggests the book's exilic and post-exilic editorial expansion. Furthermore, Wöhrle argues that Pentateuchal references such as the Jacob narrative, the Exodus narrative, and the Wilderness narrative in Hosea 12 show disruptive syntax which points to later additions to the book of Hosea. Therefore, the references to the traditions are irrelevant for understanding the dating and composition of Hosea. Based on his interpretation of the book of Four (Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah), he argues that the four exilic prophetic books present a concept opposed to DtrH.

### 5.3. Form Critical Analysis of Pentateuchal Citations in Hos 12

#### 5.3.1. Ephraim's need for exile and his return is like Jacob's (12:1-15 [11:12–12:14])

##### 5.3.1.1. Translation and critical notes

<sup>12:1</sup> Ephraim has surrounded me with a lie<sup>98</sup> and the house of Israel with deceit; and Judah<sup>99</sup> is still roaming<sup>100</sup> with God and with the Holy One who is faithful. <sup>2</sup>Ephraim is feeding on wind and following the east wind all day. He multiplies falsehood and destruction. And they make<sup>101</sup> a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt. <sup>3</sup>And YHWH has a dispute<sup>102</sup> with Judah and will punish upon Jacob according to his ways, and YHWH will repay Jacob according to Jacob's deeds. <sup>4</sup>In the womb, Jacob took his brother by the heel, and in his maturity Jacob contended with God. <sup>5</sup>And he wrestled with the angel and prevailed. He wept and sought his favor. He found YHWH at Bethel and there

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<sup>98</sup> The term, כָּחַשׁ, is a noun, common masculine singular absolute form. With another term, מְרָמָה, in the verse, possible translations are “a lie, deceit, and treachery.” Sweeney points out that the term, מְרָמָה, is frequently used in relation to “deceptive trading practices” in Hos 12:8; Amos 8:5; Prov 11:1; 20:23; Mic 6:11. See Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:118.

<sup>99</sup> MT reads it as “and Judah” but the LXX and the Peshitta connect it to the previous sentence, translating “the house of Israel and Judah” as the subject of deceit.

<sup>100</sup> The verb, רָד, is not fully understood. Most commentators view it as a participle form of רוּד. Another meaning is “wandering restlessly” (BDB, 8946). Others propose that the verb derives from the root רָדָה (to rule) in order to explain Judah's position after the fall of northern Israel. See Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:118.

<sup>101</sup> The verb, כָּרַת, mainly means “cut off or hew.” With the term, בְּרִית, it changes to “make a covenant” because the action of cutting up and distribution of the flesh of the victim is the ancient custom of making a covenant.

<sup>102</sup> Many commentators translate the term, רִיב, as “lawsuit, case at law, or indictment.”

he spoke with us.<sup>103</sup> <sup>6</sup>And YHWH, the God of hosts, YHWH is His remembrance.<sup>104</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>Therefore, you will return to your God; observe fidelity and law,<sup>105</sup> and wait for your  
 God continually. <sup>8</sup>In a merchant's<sup>106</sup> hands are false scales, he loves to oppress. <sup>9</sup>And  
 Ephraim said,

*"Surely, I have become rich and found wealth for my self; in all my labors, they  
 will not find in me any iniquity which is a sin."*

<sup>10</sup>*But I am YHWH, your God, from the land of Egypt; I will again bring you back in  
 tents like the day of an appointed feast*<sup>107</sup>. <sup>11</sup>*And I have spoken to the prophets,  
 and I multiplied visions, and by the hand of the prophets, I gave parables.*<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> The LXX and the Peshitta read it as "with him." Commentators usually follow the translation of the LXX. MT is conjectured.

<sup>104</sup> Sweeney compares this term with the phrase, יהוה זכר, in Ps 135:13 and concludes that this unusual expression of "his remembrance" can be a synonym for "his name." Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:122.

<sup>105</sup> Commentators usually translate this phrase as "hold fast to love and justice (מִשְׁפָּט)." However, since that phrase frequently nuances a sense of loyalty in a relationship, "observe fidelity and law" is preferable. Macintosh translates it as "observe goodness and justice." Cf. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 491.

<sup>106</sup> Scholars believe that the term "Canaan" frequently refers to Phoenician merchants, based on Zeph 1:11 and Ezek 16:29; 17:4. In contrast, Macintosh rejects this view and states that "the occurrence of Ephraim in the next verse indicates that the usage here is gentilic." See *ibid.*, 494. Sweeney proposes that Hosea rhetorically uses the term in order to point out that Israel is now immoral and subject to the same punishment, like the Canaanites who were displaced from the land. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:123.

<sup>107</sup> The term, מועד, normally designates "appointed time or place" for festival celebration. Macintosh disagrees with this view. Cf. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 499.

<sup>108</sup> The term, הִמָּדֵד, means "to be like, resemble," and conveys an action to think, devise, or make comparisons. Sweeney points out that when the term is used to mean "to cease, cause to cease, destroy," the form is always conjugated in other *binyanim*, but here in verse 11, the term is conjugated in *piel* which is likely "to make comparisons." Based on the prophetic setting in the sentence, either parables or metaphors are appropriate translations.

<sup>12</sup>If there is iniquity in Gilead, they shall surely come to vanity. In Gilgal, they sacrificed bulls; their altars also are like stone heaps on the furrows of the field.<sup>109</sup> <sup>13</sup>And Jacob fled to the land of Aram; there Israel served for a wife, and for wife he watched. <sup>14</sup>But, by a propoheet, YHWH brought Israel from Egypt and by a prophet Israel was guarded. <sup>15</sup>Ephraim has provoked bitterness; so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him and will bring back his reproach to him.

### 5.3.1.2. Structure

The structure of Hos 12:1–15 [11:19–12:14]  
Ephraim’s need for exile and his return is like Jacob’s

I. Hosea’s Premise: An Account of Ephraim’s Lies and Deceit	12:1–2
A. Comparing Ephraim’s sin with Judah	1
1. A report of Ephraim’s lies and deceit	1a
2. A report of Judah’s faithfulness	1b
B. A detailed report about Ephraim’s falsehood	2
1. Ephraim’s vanity	2aα
2. Ephraim’s ceaseless iniquity	2aβ
3. A report of Ephraim’s alliance with Assyria and Egypt	2b
II. A Didactic Lesson from the Jacob Tradition	3–9
A. Hosea’s admonition about YHWH’s judgment	3
1. YHWH’s will upon Judah	3a
2. YHWH’s will upon Jacob	3b
B. Hosea’s reflection of Jacob story	4–5
1. Jacob grasped his brother’s heel	4a
2. Jacob contended with God	4b

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<sup>109</sup> Sweeney suggests that this verse is the continuing speech of YHWH because the unspecified “they” in v. 12 should be the referent of “the prophet” in v. 11. Cf. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:125.

3. Jacob strove with the angel	5aα
4. Jacob wept and sought his favor	5aβ
5. YHWH met Jacob and spoke to him	5b
C. Hosea's appeal to return to YHWH	6–7
1. Acknowledgement of YHWH	6
2. The responsibility of the Israelites	7
a. Return to your God!	7a
b. Hosea's first command	7bα
c. Hosea's second command	7bβ
D. Hosea's charge against Ephraim's deceit and arrogance	8–9
1. A metaphoric image of Ephraim's deceit	8
2. Ephraim's defensive speech	9
a. Speech formula	9aα
b. Ephraim's understanding of himself	9aβ
c. Ephraim's arrogance and mistake	9b
III. A Didactic Lesson from the Exodus/Wilderness Traditions	10–11
A. YHWH's speech: Remember me!	10
1. Exodus: salvation comes from YHWH	10a
2. Wilderness: Need of returning to the tents	10b
B. Prophetic activities	11
1. YHWH's direct guidance to Israel	11a
2. YHWH's indirect guidance to Israel	11b
IV. Summary Account for the Value of the Didactic Traditions	12–15
A. An account of the importance of Jacob tradition	12–13
1. The role of Gilead and Gilgal in Jacob tradition	12
a. Laban and Jacob made a treaty in Gilead	12aα
b. Gilgal as a cultic site in relation to the prophets	12aβ
c. The role of Gilead and Gilgal as the marker of the borders	12b
2. The role of Aram and family history	13
a. Aram as Jacob's refuge	13a

b. Jacob's family history	13b
B. An account of the importance of Exodus/Wilderness traditions	14
1. Exodus: the prophet saved Israel from Egypt	14a
2. Wilderness: the prophet guarded Israel from danger	14b
C. Hosea's report of punishment on Ephraim	15
1. The reason of YHWH's punishment	15a
2. The outcome of YHWH's punishment	15b
* Based on MT	

Hos 12:1–15 [11:19–12:14] is a subunit of Hosea's lengthy discourse to present Israel's illicit worship and betrayal of YHWH (Hos 9:1–14:1 [9:1–13:16]), indicated in the structure of the book of Hosea above (See II. Main Body: Parenetic Appeal for Israel's Return 1:2–14:9). Hosea's discourse reflects the history of the relationship between YHWH and Israel and points out the reasons why YHWH decides to bring punishment upon Israel. Hosea charged Israel with abandoning YHWH throughout their history. YHWH also stands as a speaker to say that Israel has abandoned YHWH. According to Sweeney, throughout the discourse, Hosea's speech style shows a pattern in which "the prophet first speaks and provides the context by which the following words of YHWH are to be understood."<sup>110</sup> This unique style is confusing because it is difficult for the reader to understand who is speaking. However, as I mentioned earlier, this frequent change of the speaker in the narrative emphasizes the imminent situation of the prophetic message. The literary function empowers the prophetic activity. The prophetic proclamation becomes the word of YHWH through the prophet who is a true messenger of YHWH.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 1:93.

This text block is distinctly separate from the both previous block (Hos 10:9–11:11) as well as the next block (Hos 13:1–14:1 [13:1–13:16]) because the content and theme of each block is entirely different. Hos 10:9–11:11 deals with the sin of Ephraim (by using an image of the trained heifer as well as the metaphor of parent and child) and appeals to return to YHWH. Hosea emphasizes Ephraim’s abandonment in Hos 11:7, stating that “My people are bent on turning away from me.” In Hos 11:11, the conclusive prophetic word formula, **נֹאמַר יְהוָה** (declares the Lord), appears and sets the boundary of this unit. The new text block (Hos 12:1–15) begins with the accusation of Ephraim’s guilt. Ephraim’s sinful behavior is expressed in a different way, as full of lies and deceit toward YHWH. Continuing use of Israel’s old traditions in Hos 12 distinctly structures this block and separates it from the next block, which is more focused on YHWH’s punishment toward Ephraim’s exalted conceit in Hos 13:1–14:1.

As a part of the big discourse block, Hos 12 is especially focused on Ephraim’s need for exile and his need to return, like in the Jacob story. Ephraim (as a metaphoric expression of Israel) is accused by Hosea of its deceit and falsehood.<sup>111</sup> Previous structural division, mainly by Wolff, assumes that Hos 12–14 is an additional oracle of

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<sup>111</sup> Some scholars argue that Ephraim and Israel are not interchangeable because there are indications that Ephraim and Israel refer to two different rival kingdoms. For example, Hos 5:5 reads:

וְעֵנָה גִּאְזוֹן־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָנָיו וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְאַפְרַיִם יִכָּשְׁלוּ בַּעֲוֹנָם כָּשָׁל גַּם־יְהוּדָה עִמָּם:

“Israel’s pride testifies against him, and Israel and Ephraim shall stumble because of their wrongdoing; Judah also stumbles with them.” Cook argues that the two kingdoms were controlled by Menahem in the center of Samaria and by Pekah in the rest of Israel. Kuan also suggests that there were political parties and their struggles as rival kingdoms. For the discussion of the study in detail, see Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984); H. J. Cook, “Pekah,” *VT* 14 (1964): 121–35; Kuan, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, 126–128.



judgment, followed by restoration. Wolff understands that the ending theme of each three literary blocks was made by later redactional hands. I already mention that this argument is problematic, as the prophet can proclaim judgment, as well as restoration, in a rhetorical scheme. Rather, Hos 12 is a continuing discourse that pinpoints YHWH's punishment following the report of Israel's wrong behavior. The text also teaches how to return from the sinful falsehood. It reflects the old traditions, such as story of the Jacob narrative, working as a didactic lesson.

Hos 12:1–15 easily divides into four sections by a change of topics: Hos 12:1–2 features a report of Ephraim's lies and deceit; Hos 12:3–9 consists of Hosea's teaching from the Jacob tradition; Hos 12:10–11 consists of Hosea's teaching from the Exodus/wilderness traditions; and Hos 12:12–15 finally summarizes the value of didactic lessons from the traditions, comparing them with current false status of Israel.

First, the contents of Hos 12:1–2 indicate that this passage is a prophetic announcement of the falsehood of Ephraim. The unit is cast in first person descriptive language which indicates Hosea is the speaker. However, the third person form concerning the behavior of Judah, as well as Ephraim's ceaseless iniquity, interrupts this literary style. Nevertheless, Hosea strongly points out the falsehood of Ephraim and her political alliance with Assyria and Egypt as a problem. Thus this unit functions as Hosea's premise to report and prosecute Israel for its iniquity.

After the final oracular speech in Hos 11:11, Hosea accuses Ephraim of iniquity and falsehood. In particular in Hos 12:1, Hosea points out the misconduct of Ephraim, stating that "Ephraim has surrounded me with a lie and the house of Israel with deceit." That is, this statement creates a literary section which works with Hos 12:15b, the final

verse of this unit. The explanatory concern of the *כְּחֹשׁ* and *מִרְמָה* is evident in the concluding verse of Hos 12:15, which explains not only that the infidelity of Ephraim will result in severe punishment, but also that the rigor of this punishment is the result of Ephraim's continuing abandonment of YHWH.

Second, the structure of Hos 12:3–9 is constituted by four text blocks under the theme of a didactic lesson from the Jacob tradition. Verse 3 constitutes Hosea's admonition about YHWH's judgment in that it proclaims YHWH's dispute with Judah by the term, *רִיב*, and the importance of retribution according to Jacob's deeds. Verses 4–5 comprise of a series of statements concerning the most important moments of Jacob's life time in Hosea's opinion in relation to the didactic lesson on which Hosea wants to focus. The statements list the story of Israel's patriarch from the birth of Jacob to his direct contact with YHWH. Verses 6–7 focus on Hosea's appeal for the Israelites to return to YHWH. Remembrance of the power of YHWH is noticeably emphasized. Hosea ostensibly commands Israel to observe fidelity and law, and wait for YHWH continually. Verses 8–9 contain Hosea's description of Ephraim's actual deceit and defensive speech which shows Ephraim's arrogance and mistake.

Hosea's premise in Hos 12:1–2 comprises the prophet's proposal/accusation to Israel, to portray Ephraim's vanity and ceaseless iniquity in relation to the false political relationship with Assyria and Egypt. Hos 12:3–9, then, persuades Israel by use of the Jacob tradition which speaks of Jacob's life story, indicating that Jacob truly depended on YHWH and that he practiced steadfast love to YHWH and waited for YHWH. Therefore, Hosea appeals for Israel to return to YHWH.

Third, Hos 12:10–11 shifts to the second didactic lesson from the Exodus/Wilderness traditions which is that YHWH is their God who saved Israel from the land of Egypt and that the prophet is the one to whom YHWH spoke. This unit constitutes the first person form of YHWH's direct speech to intensify YHWH's will. Verse 10 contains the well-known statement, "I am YHWH, your God, from the land of Egypt." The verse recalls the history of Israel and suggests on whom will the Israelites depend. Verse 11 emphasizes how the prophets and the prophetic works relate to YHWH's plan/will. The prophets are the people to whom YHWH directly speaks. Their tasks and works are YHWH's own messages.

Last, Hos 12:12–15 summarizes the unit, revisiting and rephrasing Hos 12:1–11 in brief sentences, but not ignoring the most important points that Hosea lays out. Hos 12:12–15 contains three summary accounts concerning the purpose of the previous didactic lessons and accusation/report of Ephraim's sinful behaviors. The first account (vv.12–13) explains the importance of the Jacob tradition, indicating that Gilead and Gilgal are not only very important places where Laban and Jacob built a border marker, but also cultic places where the prophets played a significant role. Moreover, Aram was Jacob's refuge and Jacob had his family there. The second account (v. 14) emphasizes the value of the prophets and their work as messengers of YHWH in relation to the Exodus/Wilderness traditions. The final account (v. 15) reports impending disaster as punishment of YHWH.

The contents of Hos 12 clearly focus on characters such as Ephraim, Jacob, and the prophet. The speakers reflect prophetic messages including Hosea's intent, practice, and attitude. These observations suggest the following structural analysis of Hos 12.

### The structural analysis of Hos 12 based on the characters (Fig. 1)

A. Ephraim cannot be trusted	1–2
B. Jacob's story teaches a lesson	3–5
A'. Ephraim does not realize its own arrogance and mistake	6–9
C. I am YHWH who brought you out of Egypt	10–11
B'. Jacob tradition teaches the Israelites to ally with Aram	12–13
C'. The Exodus/Wilderness traditions legitimate prophetic activities	14
A". Ephraim's miserable future according to YHWH's punishment	15

The structure of these symmetrical literary focuses (Fig. 1) illustrates Hosea's purpose of the prophetic speech, especially Hosea's political intent in the final summary. Ephraim's falsehood as a character pairs with the destination as a result (A and A"). A report of Ephraim's iniquity (A) ends with a final judgment (A") unless Ephraim learns from the Jacob and Exodus/Wilderness traditions and turns to the way that Hosea appeals. The Jacob tradition as the first teaching example pairs with Hosea's main argument, "Ally with Aram" (B and B'). Jacob's life story and his relation to YHWH are listed in the narrative (B). Hosea again summarizes the main point from the tradition and briefly but decisively promotes his political intention (B'). The Exodus/Wilderness traditions as the second teaching example pair with Hosea's main argument, "YHWH is the one who saves: Listen to the prophet" (C and C'). YHWH legitimates prophetic activities in Exodus/Wilderness traditions (C). The prophet is one who saved and guarded Israel (C'). The interesting insertion of the report about Ephraim's arrogance and mistake (A') emphasizes that Ephraim is the subject of the didactic lesson, planned in Hosea 12. Finally, Hos 12 utilizes group B and group C to compare with group A.

- Literary movement of the characters in the narrative (Fig. 2)

1<sup>st</sup> move: Ephraim's falsehood – Jacob tradition

2<sup>nd</sup> move: Ephraim's falsehood – Exodus/Wilderness traditions

3<sup>rd</sup> move: Jacob tradition – Exodus/Wilderness traditions – Ephraim's future

Literary movements of the characters in the narrative (Fig. 2) systematically consist of dynamics between the current situation of Israel and past traditions as a model of lesson. First, the narrator indicates Israel's failure and suggests the Jacob tradition as a teaching tool. Second, the narrator indicates again Israel's failure and suggests the Exodus/Wilderness traditions to learn from the past. Lastly, the narrator summarizes the Jacob tradition, and then the Exodus/Wilderness traditions, and finally prophesies Israel's doomed future. The intention of the structure formation as indicated in Figs. 1 and 2 is to serve as a rhetorical device to the audience of northern Israel concerning Hosea's shifts between Ephraim's illicit behavior with impending punishments upon them and the Pentateuchal citations to point out the way how to avoid that judgment.

#### 5.3.1.3. Genre

The overarching genre of Hos 12 is mainly "Didactic, Prophetic Announcement," which includes "Prophetic Judgment against the People" as well as "Prophetic Announcement of Salvation." The passage also is an oratorical style and a type of prophetic discourse that attempts to explain how YHWH's intentions are manifested in human affairs. Although the genre lacks a characteristic literary form, the identification of this text as an example of the Prophetic Announcement genre is evident from several of its features. First is the frequent changes of the tone and personal pronouns between Hosea and YHWH, which have to be carefully analyzed. Scholars generally recognize the

difficult nature of such analysis. However, there are some literary hints that provide clues for the identification of the speaker. The structure of this text falls into three basic parts: the Prophetic Judgment against the people over the illicit behaviors in Hos 12:1, 2, 8, 9, and 15, narratives that explain the past experience of the Israelites through the Pentateuchal traditions, and Prophetic Announcement of Salvation. The speaker accuses the Israelites of their sinful behavior in detail in order to proclaim prophetic judgment against the people. As an element of the prophetic announcement, there is a clear address in the beginning of this textual block. Address is a speech directed to a particular audience and here, in Hos 12, the audience is specifically Ephraim. Along with the prophetic judgment, the speaker cites the old Pentateuchal traditions as a rhetorical device to persuade his audience. The traditions were written in a narrative style, summarizing stories that were available to the speaker.

Hos 12:1–2 establishes one of the main genres by placing prophetic judgement against Ephraim, implicating the Israelites. In general, scholars understand these verses as a divine speech that is distinct from its context as a separate oral unit. The first-person style of the beginning of the verse hints that the speaker is YHWH because the previous verse (Hos 11:11b) finishes with the indication (*nahum Adonai*) that the speaker was the prophet. From Hos 12:1, the divine speech begins and the main statement describes Ephraim's deceit and failure to obey YHWH. Sweeney believes that verse 1 is a dialogue between the prophet and YHWH, arguing that Hos 1:1a is YHWH's speech while Hos 1:1b is Hosea's speech. The third person form used in verse 1b supports this argument, and the following term, *לְעִי* (with YHWH), suggests the speaker is the prophet. Verse 2 continues the prophetic judgment speech against the people, stating Hosea's problem

with Ephraim. Therefore, vv. 1–2 play as an Accusation, which is one of the trial genres. An accusation usually specifies the acts of guilt in order to provide the reason for the oracle of punishment. It serves also as an element of the prophetic judgment speech in the way that the accusation functions as a means for the prophet to convey the reasons for YHWH's punishment of the accused.<sup>112</sup>

The term, רִיב (dispute), in verse 3 is generally regarded as one of indicators for the trial genres (*Gerichtsreden*). The setting may be similar to the jurisdiction of the law court. The prophetic announcements of punishment appear to have influence from the legal setting. The רִיב pattern or lawsuit form is one of characters of the prophetic speech. The verse explains that the prophetic judgment continues to call for the Israelites in the trial in order to emphasize Israel's violation.

Hos 12:4–7 includes the Pentateuchal traditions in a narrative style. The speaker narrates the traditional stories that were handed down from the ancestors. According to Sweeney, narrative is concerned with “action or movement, and it includes the interplay of emotions and ideas.”<sup>113</sup> The Jacob tradition recalls the past experience of Israel's ancestor who was blessed by YHWH and bore the name Israel. The Exodus/Wilderness traditions provide the prophet's intention that YHWH was our God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt and kept them safe during the wilderness period. The endless guidance and blessing from YHWH is the lesson from the past history, and the stories are narrated in brief narrative style. Verse 6 shows a nature of Liturgy (Liturgie). The

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<sup>112</sup> Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 512.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 525.

liturgical rendition of the statement along with the name of sanctuary in v. 5 indicates that the independent liturgical element was interwoven into the prophet's speech. The text was influenced by the liturgical prayer or doxology that proclaims YHWH as the God of hosts. In verse 7, the imperative form of the verb, תָּשׁוּב (you will return), along with the specific destination of אֶתְּהָ (you), serves as a Command (Gebot), which is a literary genre that is usually expressed by an imperative form but appears here by forms with an imperative function.

Hos 12:8–9 again returns to the previous style used in vv. 1–2. The prophetic judgment on Ephraim is told and Ephraim responds defensively to the address. The literary genre is broadly Prophetic Judgment against the People. However, other sub-genres are easily observed. As discussed above, Hosea's trial language charges Ephraim of deceit and arrogance, and Ephraim's speech begins with the speech formula, וַיֹּאמֶר אֶפְרַיִם (and Ephraim responded).

Hos 12:10–11 serves as the second speech of YHWH to provide a didactic lesson from the traditions. At this time, the speech formula is distinctively interesting “וְאָנֹכִי יְהוָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (I am YHWH, your God, from the land of Egypt)” This self-identification formula addresses the Israelites in second person address form. The statement functions as a means to identify who the speaker is to the audience. The speech formula based on the first person narration continues until verse 11.

Hos 12:12–15 are constituted as a Summary-Appraisal which finally ends with the prophetic announcement over the judgement of Ephraim. This block includes the summary account of the previous prophetic speeches along with the didactic lesson



through the old Pentateuchal traditions. The prophet's proposal to seek an answer for the current problem is not a generic classification as the proposal is more a functional definition. The prophet's proposal or petition to change a situation is easily identified by its didactic function of the term *אם* (if) in v. 12. The text reemphasizes the importance of the traditions as a means of reflection in the brief narrative which focuses on prophetic activities. The Summary-Appraisal establishes the character of the text as a prophetic announcement, inasmuch as it identifies the nearness of the future punishment by YHWH. Thus, the prophet calls upon the Israelites to evaluate the problematic ground of their current situation.

#### 5.3.1.4. Setting

The setting of the writing and reading of Hos 12:1–15 is the same as that of the book as a whole discussed in the section above (§ 4.3.3.4.). The literary divisions by recent redaction criticism posit that Hos 12 is a later edition or addition by the Deuteronomist. For example, Wolff suggests the beginning of Shalmaneser V's reign as a possible date because Gilead has been captured by Tiglath Pileser, and Ephraim swings between Assyria and Egypt.<sup>114</sup> However, if one recognizes Hosea's world view in his message and the continuous argument from the marriage metaphor throughout the chapters of the book of Hosea, it is noteworthy that Hos 12 is another rhetorical way of Hosea's persuasion of the Israelites by using the old Pentateuchal traditions. Such traditions and Hosea's use of key points from the traditions have revealed Hosea's

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<sup>114</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, 209.

political viewpoint and argument, as well as his sensitivity at his world, based on the divine guidance of his own experience. As the prophet points out that the reason of YHWH's judgment against the people is their wrong relationship with other nations, the Pentateuchal citations remind the Israelites how their ancestor acted when there was a similar crisis. Hosea tells the story of the prophet, Moses, who boldly guided the Israelites when they complained.

Several additional observations in Hos 12 are noteworthy to consider the historical setting of this text. First, Assyrian foreign trade policy during the Jehu dynasty irritates Hosea, who views the trade with Egypt and Assyria as problematic. In Hos 12:1–2 [11:12–12:1], images of illusions to calamity appear. Ephraim surrounds YHWH with deceit. Now, Ephraim makes a covenant with Assyria and oil is carried to Egypt as noted in Hos 12:2. In Israel's history, Egypt was always an enemy. However, Hosea looks at the political movement that Israel is now allied with Egypt. He reminds the Israelites of Deuteronomy's argument against Egypt—which was emphasized about fifty times in the book—that Israel was a slave in Egypt and YHWH brought them out of Egypt. The goals of Assyrian foreign policy were not going out to destroy Israel. Rather, Assyria used their military power to expand westward to control trade routes that went through Israel so that ultimately Assyria controlled trade with and later conquered Egypt. Assyria started by trading with Egypt, basically making the Egyptians more dependent on the Assyrian economy. But ultimately, Assyria wanted to move southwest and take over the entirety of Egypt, which they did two hundred years later.

Second, Hosea began his prophetic ministry before northern Israel fell as the message of the Jacob tradition supports the political relationship between Israel and Aram.

Hosea drew upon the tradition in order to remind the Israelites how Jacob, their ancestor, acted when he was in crisis. Hosea criticizes the Jehu dynasty in the marriage metaphor, and now he mentions Jacob who went to Aram for help. Aram is where the Israelites' ancestors lived. Hosea teaches the Israelites about the traditions because they do not realize the future threat of Assyria. The setting of the Jacob tradition in Hos 12:3–5, 12–13 is still in debate. However, as we have discussed in the first section (§ 5.2.), scholars have to consider Hosea's rhetorical approaches to persuade his people. Discussions whether Hosea had the present form of Gen 25–35, or an earlier form of the tradition, or an alternative form of the tradition have not yielded a consensus. However, it seems convincing that Hosea had access to some versions of the tradition which were either orally transmitted or in written forms during his ministry.

Victor Hurowitz explores the Assyriological background of Jacob's vision in Gen 28 as the term, מִזְבֵּחַ (ladder), is a feature of a Babylonian temple.<sup>115</sup> He believes that the Assyrian temple was built in the same model, and that Assyrian law code uses the same formula, and that Assyrian treaty texts use apodictic legal forms. For example, Assyrian treaty texts laid out the basic pattern which is used in the book of Exodus, "I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of Egypt; I am Shalmaneser III who gave peace to you, you shall not..." Therefore, he concludes that Assyrian influence on the writings and Israel's traditions is large. As a result, oral traditions and writings along with such influence developed continually through the monarchic period. As Hosea clearly cites the traditions, I argue that Hosea knew something of the Pentateuchal stories. The details do

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<sup>115</sup> Hurowitz Avigdor Victor, "Babylon in Bethel-New Light on Jacob's Dream," in *Orientalism, Assyriology and the Bible*, ed. Steven W. Holloway (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 436–48.

not always match what we see in Genesis but the prophet here is rehearsing history as understood in Genesis and Exodus.

Third, the Bethel sanctuary was the focus of 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship. As we discussed in the scholarly reviews above, the discussion was dense. Ginsberg and Good believe that the Bethel cult is the main target of Hosea's criticism when he employs Jacob's image. The angels of the Bethel sanctuary were reminiscent of polytheism. Dozeman also believes that the Bethel cult was where northern Israel found polytheistic worship. Their focus on the Bethel cult unfortunately began from the view that Jacob in the book of Hosea is negatively described. This approach finally pushes interpretations to conclude that the mention of the Bethel cult is to criticize the golden calf worship or other Canaanite idol worship practices. Such interpretations are also influenced by the religious interpretation of the marriage metaphor based on the Israelites' religious apostasy against YHWH, which provides a plain background for scholars. Thus, scholars' approaches were limited and did not fully explain why the Jacob tradition and the Bethel sanctuary are mentioned in Hosea's proclamation.

Indeed, the Bethel sanctuary is the royal sanctuary of northern Israel, which Jacob founded. According to Sweeney, the Jacob traditions, including the reference to the Bethel sanctuary in Hos 12, play an important role in explaining the origins of the northern kingdom of Israel. For example, Sweeney argues that the references, such as the conflict with Esau, the wrestling with the man/God/angel, and the vision of YHWH at Bethel, emphasize the national experience and character of northern Israel. Moreover, the references to YHWH's granting the name Israel to Jacob, Peniel, Jacob's wounded thigh, and the account of the vision at Bethel explain the origins of Israel's royal sanctuary, "not

in polemical terms as in the case of Jeroboam ben Nebat (1 Kgs 12:25–13:34) but as a site that celebrated Jacob’s encounter with YHWH” and the promise for Jacob to be a great nation.<sup>116</sup> In other words, Sweeney believes that these clear focuses on the national identity of the northern kingdom of Israel present their setting in the time of kingdom under Jeroboam ben Nebat and prior to its downfall. I agree that Hosea’s use of Jacob narratives should be very positive as a didactic lesson in Hosea’s proclamation. To point out Israel’s patriarch as a deceiver or failure seems not necessary in the context of Hosea. Why would Hosea accuse Jacob of his deceitful manner in order to persuade the Israelites to repent, by using their major ancestor, whose name itself represents the nation? Rather, as Ackroyd and Stuart argue, Jacob is a model figure in the narrative which the Israelites would have to follow. It is likely that the Jacob citations stem from the period prior to the Assyrian invasion of Israel during the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-732), and that the book of Hosea was mainly written before that time.

Fourth, the Exodus/Wilderness traditions have been discussed in various ways above. In verse 10, YHWH speaks to the Israelites about the Exodus event of which the people have to be reminded again and again. Recalling the days in the wilderness, YHWH mentions that he will lead them into the tents as in those days. The most general interpretation on this from the traditions is, for example, to see the wilderness as the place where the relationship between YHWH and Israel was intact. For example, based on the covenant tradition, Neef values the love relationship between them during the period.

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<sup>116</sup> Marvin Sweeney, “Hosea’s Reading of Pentateuchal Narratives: A Window for A Foundational E Stratum,” forthcoming.

Other scholars also view the covenant relationship from the Wilderness narratives as important.

In short, Hosea's focus is not on the period of wilderness but rather because the Exodus and Wilderness events are foundational events in Israel's history, the Israelites would have understood what the events meant to them. Interpreters propose that the traditions point to the time when the covenant relationship was built and continued. It is noteworthy that through the memory of the Exodus tradition, Hosea emphasizes the role Egypt played in Israel's history. In Hos 12:2, 10, and 14, Hosea refers to Egypt three times. It is significant to note that throughout the history Egypt is always the enemy of the Israelites. It is likely that the setting of the text must have been when Hosea questioned the consequences of trade with Assyria when due to the Assyrian's trade policy and future vision, Israel would have had to trade with Egypt.

Throughout most of twentieth century, scholars believed that the book of Hosea was written during the Syro-Ephraimite war because of its statements against Israelite monarchy and its portrayal of warfare and fear of violence. Scholars only looked at the background of warfare in Hosea and concluded that it has to be written during the Syro-Ephraimite war. The key scholar to argue this was Albright Alt, the major German historian of the early twentieth century, whose scholarship was highly regarded. However, Alt made a mistake when he argued that in Hos 5:8–6:6, Hosea proclaims a series of five oracles during and after the Syro-Ephraimite war probably from 733 to 732 BCE.<sup>117</sup> His writing spread the common assumption that the background for the book of Hosea was

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<sup>117</sup> Albright Alt, "Hosea 5,8-6,6: Ein Krieg Und Seine Folgen in Prophetischer Beleuchtung," *NKZ* 30 (1919): 537–68.

the Syro-Ephraimite war. However, Alt was mistaken because there is no conflict between Israel and Judah in the text and they even went to Assyria together. Hosea's problem was not the war. Therefore, Alt's understanding of setting was wrong but Alt's argument has been used to argue that Hosea is a later prophet. Instead of Alt's opinion, I argue that the issues that Hosea brings up actually date to the Jehu dynasty. Hosea asks whether this alliance with Assyria is right. Hosea argues that the relationship with Assyria, the trademark of the house of Jehu, founded at Jezreel, is wrong and that the Israelites should ally with Aram instead because that is where their ancestors came from.

In his article, "The Portrayal of Assyria in the Books of Kings," Sweeney argues that the Assyrian empire contributes to the presentation of Israel's and Judah's history in 1–2 Kings.<sup>118</sup> Both Israel and Judah were vassals of Assyria from the Jehu dynasty on and after Israel was demolished by Assyria due to a result of abrogating its relationship with Assyria, Judah continued the vassal relationship until Assyria and Egypt were defeated by the Babylonians in 609 and 605 BCE.<sup>119</sup> Whoever made and continued a vassal relationship with Assyria was prosperous, even though there were few attempts to break the relationship by assassinating pre-Assyrian factions, such as Zechariah and Pekahiah. Sweeney suggests that King Pekah of Israel allied with Aram to oppose Assyria, probably influenced by the prophetic movement, such as Hosea's proclamation against the relationship with Assyria.

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<sup>118</sup> Sweeney, "The Portrayal of Assyria in the Book of Kings."

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 275.

#### 5.3.1.5. Intention

On the basis of the discussions of structure, genre, and setting above, it is clear that the intention of Hos 12, especially the Pentateuchal citations, is to appeal for the audience to learn from the traditions and change Israel's political alliance with Assyria to Aram. Hosea sees that the future crisis for northern Israel is near. Why does Hosea cite the traditions? What does Hosea tell us from the traditions? Not only the marriage motif in Hos 1–3 but also Hos 12 decisively emphasize Hosea's concern; therefore, interpreters have to consider Hosea's appeal in his political viewpoint. Hosea 12 is known for referencing Assyria as a problem and for the citation of Pentateuchal tradition concerning Jacob's relationship with Aram and Moses's relationship with Egypt, the two key powers highlighted by Hosea as problematic.

Interpreters are increasingly abandoning the view that the prophetic messages of hope for Israel must be assigned only to the post-exilic period as they recognize that prophecy is a much more complex phenomenon than previously believed. Essentially, prophets represented a variety of viewpoints in ancient Israelite and Judean society, and they were heavily involved in the public political and religious debates of their day. The prophets announced either judgment or salvation, depending on how they viewed YHWH's intentions and the choices for action that people might take. Many scholars posit the final form of the book as the product of post-exilic redaction. However, this assumption has little basis. Sweeney argues that "the themes of the book focus entirely on the punishment and exile of the northern kingdom of Israel during the Assyrian



period.”<sup>120</sup> He believes that the confusion comes from the text where Judean suffering is addressed. However, he notes that the context of such text is likely the Assyrian threat against Israel.

The overall intention of Hos 12:4–6 clearly centers around the Jacob tradition and Hosea’s interpretation of its significance in relation to the political relationship with Aram. In Hosea’s use of the Jacob tradition, two features are noteworthy. Hosea first poses a question “who are Israel’s ancestors and where do they come from.” The answer is clearly shown in the narrative. Aram is where Israel’s ancestors came from. Matriarchs of Israel, Jacob’s wives (Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah), also came from Aram. In other words, Aram is Israel’s mother’s hometown. The biblical records below indicate that “a wandering Aramean was my ancestor,” which is Jacob in Deut 26:5. This is Israel’s primary conviction, which continues that Haran (which is Paddan Aram) was where Israel’s ancestors settled and made a family. Gen 11:31 reports that “Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram’s wife, and...they came to Haran, they settled there.” Terah died in Haran in Gen 11:32. Abraham’s brother, Nahor, settled in the same area. Abraham’s nephew Bethuel, son of Nahor and Milcah, and father of Laban and Rebecca, lived in Paddan Aram in Gen 25:20; 28:2. Later, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac in Gen 24:4. Isaac and Rebecca’s son, Jacob, fled to Aram to avoid the wrath of his brother Esau in Gen 27:43. Jacob married his wives and raised his children. Moreover, he acquired livestock and wealth in there.

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<sup>120</sup> Sweeney, “A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea,” 11.

Second, during the dynasty of Omri, Israel was allied with Aram. However, because of Jehu's submission to Assyria, Israel became allied with Assyria and regularly submitted to treaties. In Hosea's view, that relationship is problematic. Jehu looked at Aram as an enemy but Hosea reminds his audience of the previous alliance with Aram. Hosea's imagery of Israel in this political move appears negative in Hos 8:9, "For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild ass wandering alone; Ephraim has bargained for lovers." Along with the discussion of the marriage metaphor, the verse indicates that Assyria is not the right one with which to ally, and that Ephraim is symmetrically paralleled as the one who sought lovers which are the negative target of the marriage metaphor. Hosea's argument is to claim that Assyria will turn out to be a source of disaster. Hosea is questioning why Israel should be allied with Assyria.

The intention of Hosea's use of the Exodus/Wilderness traditions in Hos 12:10–11, 14 is determined by a number of factors, including 1) its continuing emphasis upon the negative image of Egypt in Hos 12:2 in relation to the reference to Egypt as a trade country, 2) its portrayal of the wilderness experience when YHWH guarded the Israelites, 3) its emphasis on the prophetic activity legitimated by YHWH, and 4) its reference to the Exodus story concerning the value of the prophet who saved Israel from Egypt as YHWH instructed.

First, Hosea's use of Egypt as a symbol of Israel's suffering and bondage serves as a political iconic representation. As I noted in the setting section, the political and economic setting of Ephraim during the end of reign of King Jeroboam ben Jehoash is viewed as problematic. Egypt is Israel's enemy and if Israel allies with Assyria who sends them down to Egypt to trade oil as noted in v.2, Israel becomes a trading partner

with Egypt. Hosea cites Moses who led the Israel out of Egypt in order to reflect how Israel's tradition regards Egypt as an enemy. Other texts in the book of Hosea also appear to support Hosea's understanding of Egypt. For example, Hos 7:11a speaks bluntly that "Ephraim is like a dove, without sense, they call Egypt." Hos 8:13 portrays Egypt as a place of punishment due to their iniquity and sins. Hos 9:3 proclaims that Ephraim will return to Egypt which is out of the land of YHWH (בְּאֶרֶץ יִהְיֶה). These references provide Israel's understanding of Egypt in their history. Thus, the Exodus tradition provides an argument to criticize the trade with Egypt.

Second, v. 10b states that YHWH will bring the Israelites back to the tents (אֹהֲלִים) for the day of an appointed time/feast (בְּיָמֵי מוֹעֵד). Such a time period is when the Israelites were in the wilderness and guarded by YHWH's protection by, for example, the pillars of cloud and fire. The assurance of future national safety is one of the key prophetic messages along with announcements of judgement and punishment. The prophet argues that YHWH is the one who saves and guards Israel. Generally, scholars associate the tents with the festival of Sukkoth, but there are also objections as the term, אֹהֶל, is used instead of סֻכּוֹת. However, Sweeney suggests that Sukkoth is traditionally the time when the Israelites celebrate the grape and olive harvest. Moreover, they also remember the period of wilderness wandering through the festival of Sukkoth as a "representative of the tents or temporary shelters in which Israel lived while in the wilderness."<sup>121</sup> In other words, Sweeney believes that the appointed days indicate a festival occasion, so the text reflects the festival of Sukkoth to remember the days in the wilderness. Based on these scholarly discussions, mentioning the wilderness period in light of the appointed days serves to

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<sup>121</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:124.

reflect on questions of how the national feast originated and in what ways the feast is important in Israel's history. The Wilderness tradition conclusively reminds Israel that it is dependent on YHWH's guidance.

Third, in v. 11, prophetic leaders are valued by YHWH as YHWH always employs them first, saying "and I have spoken to the prophets, and I multiplied visions, and by the hand of the prophets, I gave parables." Prophetic messages and ministries are legitimated by YHWH. In the time when the prophet proclaimed, the message was possibly ignored or the prophet's activities were not valued. Therefore, the text indicates how YHWH works with the prophet(s) in order to support the prophetic ministry. Last, verse 14a[13a] also highly values the prophet and his prophetic ministry. As noted "by a prophet, YHWH brought Israel from Egypt," the phrase indicates that the one who worked with YHWH is the prophet. The Hebrew phrase by beginning with *בְּנָבִיא* in two positions in v. 14[13] show that the focus and emphasis are not the phrase, "YHWH brought Israel from Egypt," but "by a prophet." Prophetic ministry in Hosea's time seems not to be valued. Thus, Hosea asserts that his proclamation means to be the direct message of YHWH.

The intention of Hos 12:12 is determined by its references of two places, Gilead and Gilgal. Throughout the chapter, the place names are an important key to figure out the intention of the text. Most scholars simply interpret that the places relate to the religious problem or illicit worship practices against YHWH. However, they do not look at the historical background of these places in terms of their origins. First of all, Gilead is where Jacob pitched his tent when Laban overtook him for Laban's household gods. After Laban received the message of God, he decided to make a covenant with Jacob and marked it by erecting a pillar and called "a heap of witness (*עֵקֶדוּתָא*)" and Jacob called

it גִּלְעָד. Sweeney proposes that these interchange presents a clear pun for the name Gildead (Gen 31:45–46).<sup>122</sup> He further argues that this narrative plays in constructing an etiological background for the creation of a treaty or alliance between Israel and Aram.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, Gilead represents a national border marker which they both agreed that they will not do evil passing the border, as indicated in Gen 31:52, “This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm” (NRSV). This relationship provides a political background of the alliance between Israel and Aram. According to Sweeney, Israel and Aram were allied in 853 BCE when they formed together to defend the Assrian monarch Shalmaneser III. The alliance broke due to the war between Israel and Aram as the Aramean king attempted to be against Israel. Then, Jehu overthrew the Omride dynasty with the support of Elijah and Elisha as the biblical text indicates in 1 Kgs 19:14–18. Moreover, Aramean king Hazael attempted to take Israel’s territory continually as Jehu allied with Assyria for benefits. Sweeney proposes that these political exchanges were based on Israel’s alliance with Assyria and argues that “Israelite tradition looks to Aram as the homeland of the ancestors associated with YHWH, this constitutes a fundamental betrayal of YHWH’s will in the eyes of Hosea.”<sup>124</sup> For Sweeney, Hos 12:12 raises a question, “is the covenant made with Laban at Gilead iniquity?”

Second, Gilgal is where Joshua set up the twelve stones which he brought from the Jordan River (Josh 4:20–24). The twelve stones signify that Israel crossed over the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 1:125.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 1:126.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

Jordan River on dry ground. Moreover, the twelve stones stand for the twelve tribes. Next, in Josh 5:9, YHWH names Gilgal for remembering that YHWH has rolled away from the Israelites the disgrace of Egypt. Namely, the meaning of Gilgal is the elimination of Egypt from Israel's memory or history. Therefore, the alliance with Egypt is clearly objected as the origin of the place name was made. As a result, Hosea recognizes the problematic ground in the alliance between Israel and Assyria/Egypt and criticizes Gilgal in order to point out the corruption of the covenant with YHWH. In Hos 4:15, Hosea criticizes Gilgal, saying "Though you play the whore, O Israel...do not enter into Gilgal...do not swear, 'As the LORD lives'" (NRSV). In Hos 9:15, Hosea again indicates that "Every evil of theirs began at Gilgal; there I came to hate them" (NRSV).

It follows, then the textual references support Hosea's viewpoint toward neighboring countries. Aram is an alliance from the Israel's ancestor as the text indicates. Egypt in the history of Gilgal is a must enemy that causes a problem. Hosea clearly proclaims his political viewpoint through the early history of Israel. Moreover, Hosea interprets the political movement of Israel in his understanding of the ancestral history and traditions. Overall, one must understand the Pentateuchal citations in relation to Hosea's rhetorical scheme. Why these didactic traditions/lessons are needed to bring up to the Israelites? If one recognizes what the traditions assert, the setting of the text becomes obvious. Hosea proclaimed his political viewpoint based on the political setting that he faced.

#### 5.4. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I first explore the discussion of various scholarly interpretations about the Pentateuchal citations. As I noted in the synthesis of the survey, scholars still show their analysis deeply based on the religious reading of the text. I argue that the negative portrayal of Jacob does not have any ground. Rather, Hosea's use of the traditions solely aims to provoke his political viewpoint learned from Israel's history and traditions. Scholarly approaches to the traditions, based on the covenant relationship or YHWH's salvation plan throughout the history, bear a productive insight. However, they are less able to recognize the political dimensions of Hosea's argument and missed Hosea's intention in relation to the book's overall message. Moreover, they have to answer to the recent theological questions why YHWH did not protect Israel.<sup>125</sup>

I have examined Hos 12 through form critical analysis. Based on the discussion of various scholarly interpretations, I have argued that Hos 12 is a subunit of Hosea's lengthy discourse to present Hosea's political viewpoint. Hosea rhetorically presents his argument, cohesively indicating Ephraim's current illicit behaviors along with Pentateuchal citations that explain the resolutions. From the marriage metaphor, Hosea continually build up his argument about the problematic ground of the political alliance with Assyria. In Hos 12, Hosea employs various Pentateuchal citations which he learns from oral traditions or in written forms. It is noteworthy that Hosea knows some of the Pentateuchal traditions. The references do not quite match with what we see in Genesis. For example, in Hosea, Jacob wrestles with an angel, and the prophet does not mean

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 1:16. Sweeney opens a discussion about Gomer's perspective asking, "does her husband lack the power or fail to fulfill his role?"

Moses. Therefore, Hosea knew the earlier version or his interpretation of the material. The point is that Hosea wants to make this argument critical by using the traditions.

In the setting of the Jacob tradition, I argue that the narrative emphasizes Jacob's character in making cases that the narrative shows Israel's national identity with Jacob and that Jacob was a trickster but he grew up as YHWH's blessed patriarch who found national sanctuaries. Through the reflections of the Jacob's citations, Hosea now argues that Jacob found blessings while he was coming to Aram and back to Israel. In the political crisis in Hosea's own view, this is the key point that Hosea asserts in Jacob citations. Hosea becomes a proponent of the position of "ally with Aram" and "break the alliance with Assyria."

In the setting of the Exodus/Wilderness traditions, I argue that the narrative emphasizes the role of Egypt in the history. The most important argument in the Exodus/Wilderness traditions in relation to all the names of the significant places is to recognize the nature of Egypt in Israel's history as Israel's enemy. By using the traditions, Hosea strongly warns the Israelites to avoid any relationship with them. Hosea also argues that the prophetic ministries are all legitimated and guided by YHWH, who endlessly brings salvation to the Israelites when they faced crisis. As prophetic activities were not valued in Hosea's time, Hosea proposes how YHWH employs the prophets in order to persuade his audience to pay attention to Hosea's message.

Additionally, Hosea is the earlier text so it does not cite any other prophetic books but cites the Pentateuch. Hosea had to go south to get away from Israel, from any possible threat because he took on an anti-Jehu position. So his book ends up getting



edited in Judah. That is why the text appears some of political statements which are specifically Judean.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Scholars believe that the purpose of the book of Hosea was to accuse the Israelites of religious apostasy reflected mainly in the metaphors and Pentateuchal citations. They ignore any vassal relationship with Assyria before northern Israel fell because there is no clear biblical textual evidence. However, I argue that the book of Hosea was written to advocate Hosea's socio-political viewpoint. Throughout the book, Hosea uses the marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations in order to accomplish his purpose. His proclamation is to point out that northern Israel has a political alliance with Assyria which means that they are trading between Assyria and Egypt. Hosea, of course, does not like this political relationship because Hosea believes that political relationship with Assyria is idolatry. What Hosea really wants to proclaim is for northern Israel to ally with Aram like "Jacob, our ancestor."

In chapter 2, I argue that the previous scholarship on the book of Hosea shows some problems in the study of the book. Therefore, I propose that: First, previously, scholars divide chapters in two, thinking that they are two different books, or in three, arguing that there are different redactional layers in each section. However, I propose that Hos 1–14 is cohesively structured units to point out Hosea's idea. Therefore, the previous divisional understanding of Hosea does not support interpretation of the book as a whole. Second, most scholars think that Hosea is talking about religious apostasy, but this misses that much of the context deals with the question, "with whom do you ally?" Hosea's political interest extensively appears throughout the book of Hosea. Third, Hosea specifically criticizes the house of Jehu. Therefore, the scholarly assessments on the dating of the book of Hosea in late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE or later have no basis as Hosea

clearly presents political dynamics of the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The key observation, that has consistently eluded scholarly endeavors to untangle the questions and issues of this text, is the recognition that Hosea presents his political argument for the future of Israel.

Methodologically, I argue that proper exegetical analysis is based upon new form-critical analysis which represents a conjunction of synchronic and diachronic methods. These two methods are complementary to one another. For example, this study not only looks at texts synchronically by analyzing their structures and genres, but also looks at texts diachronically by analyzing their settings and intentions.

In chapter 3, I explore the Ancient Near Eastern materials to reconstruct the socio-historical setting between the mid-ninth century BCE and the mid-eighth century BCE. As previously discussed, most scholars ignore Assyrian influence on northern Israel. They are not concerned about how politics played in the ancient world nor do they understand how politics influence and change things like trade, warfare, and alliance. However, political alliances do create substantial consequences.

The Ancient Near Eastern materials (the Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III, the Baghdad Tablet, III R 5, 6, the Marble-Slab Inscription, and the Black Obelisk Inscription) show that the force of Shalmaneser III created a new political era during the reign of King Ahab. Aram-Damascus and northern Israel, along with other states, had a strong anti-Assyrian policy. The Aramean coalition was powerful enough to defend their territories against the force of Assyria. northern Israel participated in this coalition during the reigns of Ahaziah and Joram, who were sons of Ahab. In other words, the relationship between Aram and northern Israel was cooperative until new political power games

began. The coalition was later dispersed and some states began to submit and pay tribute to Assyria. In particular, King Jehu, who overthrew the house of Omri, changed the former political policy to a pro-Assyrian policy as a military strategy. Thus, he obtained a promise from Shalmaneser III to protect northern Israel. The relationship with Aram was broken due to the alliance with Assyria. This political relationship between northern Israel and Assyria continued throughout the reign of Shalmaneser III.

Next, during the reign of Adad Nirari III, some states rebelled and withheld their tributes, refusing to submit to Assyria. As a result, Adad Nirari III campaigned in the Syria-Palestine area and received tributes from Mari' of Damascus, Joash of Israel, the Tyrians, and the Sidonians. As indicated in the Rimah Stele and the Calar Slab, Mari' of Damascus was a strong opponent against Assyria and subjugated northern Israel during the time of political neglect under Šamši-Adad V. The biblical text, 2 Kgs 10:32–33, records the loss of Israel's territories in this period. Joash of Israel continued the pro-Assyrian policy and submitted tribute to Assyria. In particular, Adad Nirari III broke the rising power of Aram-Damascus and gave power to Israel so that Joash of Israel again retook old Israelite territories. In sum, the Ancient Near Eastern materials clearly show the political change and the context of Israel's social-political background during the reign of the house of Omri and Jehu.

I argue that the vassal treaty relationship made by Jehu (842-815 BCE) is the main problem about which Hosea strongly complains. northern Israel under King Omri supported anti-Assyrian policy. However, Jehu overturned the anti-Assyrian foreign policy and employed pro-Assyrian policy in order to maintain northern Israel's strength among the states in the Syria-Palestine area, especially against Aram-Damascus.

Moreover, the pro-Assyrian policy was maintained throughout the Jehu dynasty which includes Jehoahaz (815-801 BCE), Jehoash (Joash, 801-786 BCE), Jeroboam II (786-746 BCE), and Zechariah (746 BCE). Thus, I propose that Assyriology is critically important in interpreting the book of Hosea as there are clear influences from Assyrian politics and writings.

In chapter 4, I analyze Hos 1–3, the marriage metaphor, by using the form critical method and propose that the general scholarly approach to the metaphor as an accusation of any religious apostasy is not enough to understand Hosea’s intention of the use of the polemical language. Hosea’s political agenda is clearly reflected in the marriage metaphor by using the marriage motif, the recurring linguistic concept in terms of love in relation to the political relationships and treaties in the Ancient Near Eastern materials. My research shows that some scholars read the marriage metaphor in conjunction with various religious settings in ancient Israel. Other scholars suggest that political readings of love language speak of a covenant/vassal relationship.

Hosea shows a special concern with the house of Jehu and the Assyrian empire. The superscription in Hos 1:1 only mentions King Jeroboam ben Joash while Judean kings, including Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, are listed. In the marriage metaphor, Hosea is against the Jehu dynasty, which is sinful in his eyes, as well as Assyria, which is his political opponent, a future threat in his mind. Hosea’s prophecy begins with the childbirth narratives in which the first son is named Jezreel, the site where Jehu overthrew the house of Omri and founded his own dynasty. The biblical texts clearly indicate that King Jehu killed Joram, the Omride (2 Kgs 9:16–26), at Jezreel. King Jehu proclaims that “the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel” (2 Kgs

9:10a) and “the corpse of Jezebel shall be like dung on the field in the territory of Jezreel” (2 Kgs 9:37a). Hosea’s political viewpoint against Assyria remained unabated. The Jehu dynasty is his main target and he criticizes all consequences of the vassal relationship.

In chapter 5, I analyze Hos 12 by using the form critical method and propose that the chapter is coherently structured by Hosea in order to rhetorically persuade his audience to compare their history of ancestors with their current political situation. There are also many statements about the loss and failure caused by the relationship with Assyria, hinting that Ephraim is always unsuccessful with Assyria. He also presents the Jacob narrative to convince the audience that Aram was their ally, and the Moses narrative along with the Exodus narrative to emphasize that not only was Egypt their enemy, but also YHWH employs the prophets for his work.

The author of the book of Hosea knows something of the Pentateuchal tradition. The author frequently uses Pentateuchal citations so as to support his own political viewpoint. Therefore, the citations belong to the earliest text of the book of Hosea. He uses those to proclaim that Israel needs to be allied with Aram because that is where the ancestor of Israel went for a bride. Hosea cites Moses in order to emphasize that Egypt is their enemy but Aram is not their enemy. The references in the book of Hosea do not quite match what we see in Genesis, which leads questions of scholarly interpretations. For example, in Hosea 12:4, Jacob wrestles “with an angel,” but in Genesis 32:24, he wrestles “with a man” instead. In Hos 12:13, the text does not mention Moses but by an anonymous prophet, “the Lord brought Israel up from Egypt.” These are key issues in the interpretation. I believe that either Hosea knew an earlier version of the narrative, or presented his interpretation of the material. Thus, scholars need to think about the

importance of reading intertextual references in the Pentateuch in relation to the political situation of Hosea's time. Hosea is arguing for an emergent political change as he sees the relationship with Assyria will bring trouble upon northern Israel.

To conclude, based on the argument above, I strongly believe that Hosea's marriage metaphor and Pentateuchal citations play a significant role in supporting Hosea's main argument in relation to Israel's political setting during the mid-eighth century BCE. There are two additional important conclusions. First, the references to Israel's relationship with Assyria and its ally Egypt throughout the book speak for Hosea's unchanging thought. What does it mean that Hosea is concerned with the house of Jehu while living during the reign of Jeroboam ben Joash? He was the fourth monarch of the Jehu line, whose own son and successor, Zechariah, was assassinated only six months into his reign. My conclusion, then, is that Hosea is certainly insisting that the alliance between the Jehu dynasty and Assyria (and Egypt) is problematic. Hosea's political points are corroborated by the historical documents which clarify Hosea's objection to Israel's alliance with Assyria. Hosea's ongoing effort seemed to be accomplished in the background of the Syro-Ephraimite war (736-732 BCE) when King Pekah of Israel (740-732 BCE) and King Rezin of Aram (792-732 BCE) formed a coalition in rebelling against Assyria. However, the result was northern Israel's demolition by Assyria as Hosea had warned.

Second, this study contributes to the dating of the book of Hosea in relation to the socio-political situation reflected in the text. Scholarly assumptions that deny a possible written form of the book of Hosea before the Persian period lead to a misunderstanding of Hosea's use of metaphor and Pentateuchal citations. These scholars attempt to put the

date of the book of Hosea back to the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE which creates a redactional problem in Hosean scholarship. Based on the analysis of the various diachronic issues in the book of Hosea, this study argues that the main composition of the book of Hosea should be dated to the time of King Jeroboam II and continue to the end of the house of Menahem (737 BCE) at the latest. Then, there were Judean editions after Hosea moved his base to Judah either when King Menahem ruled or after King Pekah failed his anti-Assyrian policy.



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